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Faith and Feminism
Religion, Rights and Violence Against Women in Brazil

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FAITH AND FEMINISM: RELIGION, RIGHTS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN BRAZIL

A thesis submitted to King's College London University for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Public Policy

29th October 2018

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Paulette Beecheno, who had enormous influence in shaping my research interests and in helping me become the woman I am today.

ABSTRACT

Gender is at the heart of politics and religion (Casanova, 2009; Aune and Nyhagen, 2015). Global processes of female emancipation and ideas surrounding the construction of gender and gender roles have come into conflict with more traditional, religious constructions of gender. Secular and religious approaches to VAW differ in the ways that gender and the family are perceived. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in debates over the help offered for violence against women (VAW). This is especially evident in Brazil, a country with high levels of VAW and ranked 5th in the world for the killing of women (Waiselfisz, 2015). Help for VAW in Brazil is offered by both faith-based and secular organisations, bringing to the fore intense debate over religious beliefs, constructions of gender, and the ways to best address VAW.

This thesis provides analysis of State, secular and Christian organisations addressing VAW. In these centres, women are offered different alternatives, from mediation and family reunification to more radical changes such as becoming feminist activists or embracing religious (Pentecostal) conversion. Contrasting religious and secular views on gender roles and gender relations affect social welfare provision for abused women and the fundamental controversy over the way women's roles and gender are perceived, impacts abused women's ability to negotiate violence in their lives. By examining domestic violence centres as disciplinary institutions (Foucault, 1991 [1975]) which mediate poor, predominantly black women's subjectivity, this thesis argues that these centres produce gendered and racialised forms of subjectivity and reveals that women's roles are considered crucial to the relationship between urban and domestic forms of violence. Therefore, addressing VAW is deeply political, linked to contested notions of both 'violence' and 'gender', which ultimately structure the way societies function.

Key Words: IPV, Domestic violence, Christianity, Pentecostalism, UCKG, Female Subjectivity, Brazil, FBOs

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AD	Assembly of God Church (<i>Assembleia de Deus</i>)
BO	Police Report (<i>Boletim de Ocorrência</i>)
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CDCM	Women's Defence and Community Centre (<i>Centro de Defesa e Convivencia da Mulher</i>)
CFC	Catholics for Choice (<i>Católicas Pelo Direito de Decidir</i>)
CNDM	National Council on Women's Rights (<i>Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher</i>)
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FPDA	Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IPEA	Applied Economics Data Collection Agency (<i>Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada</i>)
IPV	Intimate-Partner Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PNAS	National Policy for Social Welfare (<i>Politica Nacional de Assistencia Social</i>)
PT	Worker's Party (<i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i>)
RMSP	São Paulo Metropolitan Region (<i>Região Metropolitana de São Paulo</i>)
RSAE	Religious Social Action Entity
SIDIM	State Secretariat for Women's Rights (<i>Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos da Mulher</i>)
SIM	Mortality Information System (<i>Sistema de Informações de Mortalidade</i>)
SUS	Universal Healthcare System (<i>Sistema Universal de Saude</i>)

UCKG	Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (<i>Igreja Universal Reino de Deus/IURD</i>)
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPD	Women's Police Department

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION: COMPLEXITIES BETWEEN VAW, FAITH AND WELFARE SERVICES

1.1 Introduction

In August 2015, a particularly violent case of domestic violence made the headlines in Brazil: 22-year-old Gisele Santos had her hands and feet cut off in a frenzied attack by her partner of seven years, 26-year-old Elton Jones, after she tried to leave him (Globo G1, 2015). Gisele said that the relationship had been fraught with violent arguments and that she had even stopped going to school, talking to friends or using social media, due to his intense jealousy. As he repeatedly stabbed her, Gisele screamed that she forgave him and asked God to forgive him for what he was doing (ibid). The facts of this event are gruesome, but what also stood out to many people was Gisele's apparent forgiveness of a violent act that almost killed her and left her maimed for life. In an interview, Gisele said she hoped he would be incarcerated to pay for what he had done, but that ultimately her partner Elton Jones' reckoning would be with God (ibid). Asked why she did not separate from her partner of seven years even though there were regular, violent altercations, Gisele said it was because she believed that God could change people, and that through prayer she hoped he would change (ibid).

Gisele's story highlights two intertwining themes of importance in this thesis: domestic violence and religion. Firstly, Gisele's story of domestic violence, although extremely gruesome, is far from uncommon in Brazil, a country that ranks 5th in the world for lethal

violence against women (VAW) and where rates of domestic violence are estimated to be very high (Waiselfisz, 2015). Brazil's feminist movement has highlighted the issue of VAW, particularly since democratisation in the mid-1980s, arguing that male VAW has historically been excused, legitimised, or gone unpunished (e.g. Besse, 1989; Marcílio, 1993; Uribe-Uran, 2013). Their activism has led to important policy and legal changes, including the criminalisation of domestic violence through the creation of the *Maria da Penha Law* and a special 'Femicide' law (*Lei do Feminicídio*), to address femicide as a 'heinous crime' with tough penalties¹. Feminists in Brazil blame the high levels of VAW on a patriarchal culture in which violence has been normalised since colonisation by the Portuguese from the 1500s onwards (e.g. Marcílio, 1993). They claim that gendered, racialized and class-based inequalities have been institutionalised by successive governments and influential institutions – including religious organisations – which have sought to maintain patriarchal control over women and their bodies².

Secondly, Gisele's faith also caused controversy as some blamed religion for encouraging her to remain in a violent relationship. This perception of religion is very complex, and will be examined in this thesis. Furthermore, in Gisele's case, it would appear that she did not seek formal help in addressing the violence in her relationship with Elton, although she did rely on informal, female-led church groups as support networks, a finding consistent with research examining some of the ways in which women of faith cope with domestic abuse (Nason-Clark, 1997). However, if abused women in Brazil such as Gisele did seek formal help for domestic

¹ These laws will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.

² This will be explored in Chapter 3.

violence, what would this help look like? And importantly for this thesis: how would women's faith be addressed and what role would religion play in centres offering help to abused women? This thesis seeks to examine the role that faith plays in centres addressing VAW and the ways in which religion is negotiated by both service users and staff.

Welfare Services and Domestic Violence Centres in Brazil

In order to address Brazil's high levels of VAW and support women experiencing violence, the State – influenced by feminist mobilisation – created 'Women's Defence and Community Centres' (*Centro de Defesa e Convivencia da Mulher*, or CDCMs) with the objective of "attending to women in violent situations with a multidisciplinary focus aimed at managing everyday life and overcoming violent situations" (Rede de Defesa de Direitos, 2016). Brazil set up its first CDCM in 1990 and there are now 14 in the state of São Paulo, which can offer help to approximately 1500 women at a time (Prefeitura de São Paulo, 2017). These day centres have technical standards designed to help women overcome the situation of violence they find themselves in, based on a 'tripod' of help, including psychological and emotional support, social services and legal advice to women. However, as the state of São Paulo has almost 45 million inhabitants, the number of CDCMs and the number of women they can help at one time is low. Moreover, there is a chronic lack of CDCMs across the country itself.

It was upon visiting several CDCMs that the aim of this research came about. Although ostensibly offering the same services, I found fundamental differences in the ways violence was discussed and understood in the centres and among staff. I found that these differences appeared to be linked to beliefs around gender roles, gender relations and gendered identities, which in turn impacted abused women's understanding of violence, of themselves

and appeared to impact their ability to deal with violence in their lives. Why, I wondered, were the welfare services available to women so different in different areas of São Paulo? I discovered that in practice, rather than directly provided by the State, many services are provided by third parties – either non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or faith-based organisations (FBOs) – which have been contracted by the State. The growth in FBOs is consistent with a world-wide trend in which religious organisations play an increasing role in welfare, linked to neo-liberalism and austerity measures (Hjelm, 2015) and there is a growing body of literature on the role of FBOs in providing state services (e.g. see Biebricher, 2011; Chaves, 1999; Connolly, 2008; Ghatak and Abel, 2013; Mead, 1997, 2005a, 2005b; Sager, 2010; Wineburg, 2007 for US studies, and Nesti, 2002; Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh & Petterson, 2010; Østebø, Haukanes & Blystad, 2013 for EU studies). However, few studies have taken a gendered perspective within FBOs (for exception see Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh & Petterson, 2010; Østebø, Haukanes & Blystad, 2013), highlighting the need for further research.

According to the Brazilian researcher Evelina Dagnino, the government outsources services to third party providers, such as NGOs and civil society organisations, including FBOs, because the State deems them to be “reliable interlocutors” (2005:20). Therefore, rather than create CDCMs from scratch, the State awards contracts to organisations active in the field of VAW. This means that so-called ‘State’ social welfare branches will often have different backgrounds, and potentially different understandings of and views towards VAW, linked in particular to beliefs around gender roles, gender relations and gendered identities. In the case of VAW, secular and religious approaches tend to differ in the ways that gender and the family are perceived, and some feminists consider religious approaches to VAW major challenges to

the global rights-based approach (e.g. Merry, 2001; Orozco, 2009). Attempts to reduce VAW therefore highlight competing visions of those who advocate secular solutions to justice and those who promote religious ones (Merry, 2001).

Scholars within the sociology of religion have highlighted the importance of gender, and the different ways in which gender links into debates within religion and politics (e.g. Aune and Nyhagen 2015; Bayes and Tohidi, 2001; Cady and Fessenden, 2013; Casanova, 2009; Reilley and Scriver, 2013). In fact, Casanova (2009) argues that one of the biggest challenges facing the religious-secular debate and the concept of public religions³ is the religious politics of gender, which, he claims: “has become one of the most important issues facing global humanity” (2009: 14). This is because global processes of female emancipation and ideas surrounding the construction of gender and gender roles have come into conflict with more traditional, religious constructions of gender which affect some of the core religious teachings around family, reproduction and sexuality. Therefore, Casanova argues that religious politics and the politics of gender appear to have become “ubiquitously entangled” (15).

Nyhagen and Aune (2015) echo this, arguing that gender relations, gendered identities and gender equality are controversial topics at the heart of politics and religion. The authors suggest this is because gender equality issues, e.g. abortion, contraception, divorce, prostitution, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour killings are negotiated at

³ Casanova argues that from the 1980s onwards, the world saw the “de-privatisation of religion” (1994:3-6) and religions became ‘public’ as they came under the gaze of the media, politicians and social scientists. Religions also play a role in the public sphere in the form of moral and political voices (ibid).

global, national and local levels and are fundamentally intertwined with cultural, religious and secular definitions of these issues. Therefore, in Brazil, the issue of faith-based and secular organisations offering help for VAW brings to the fore intense debate over religious beliefs, constructions of gender, and the ways to best address VAW.

FBOs are common in Brazil because the Catholic Church has a long history of providing social welfare in Brazil and more recently, the growth of Evangelical Protestant religious groups has added to the large number of religious institutions concerned with social care. Brazilian scholars have also pointed to the importance of religious organisations in the construction of civil society (Almeida, 2004; Giumbelli, 2002, 2008; Montero 2009, 2012). This is linked to Brazil's vibrant 'Third Sector', which has been heavily involved in the country's economic and social progress, and has seen millions of Brazilians lifted out of poverty and social inequalities reduced (Mourier, 2013). This 'Third Sector' is dominated by religious organisations also known as 'Religious Social Action Entities' (RSAEs), and these are primarily Catholic, although there has been a growth in Evangelical Protestant organisations, as well as a few Kardecist/Spiritist and a few Afro-Brazilian organisations (ibid). In some cases, religious organisations even act as advisors that supplement and occasionally substitute for state bureaucracy that is absent or overwhelmed in many vulnerable areas (Mourier, 2013:79). In the case of VAW, I found that alongside State services, Evangelical Protestant women's groups have also mobilised around the issue, offering their own, faith-based solutions for domestic violence. These religious organisations form a rather 'grey' area of faith-based, public/private cooperation due to their growing links with State services, a theme that will be explored in this thesis.

The mix of secular/faith-based, State and public/private organisations addressing VAW in Brazil therefore make the country an important location for examining such controversies. In this thesis, I question the ways in which both service users and professionals in centres addressing VAW negotiate religion/faith, and how religion/faith impacts understandings of gender and violence. At the heart of this argument is the fundamental controversy over the way women's roles and gender are perceived, which can also affect abused women's ability to negotiate the violence in their lives. Therefore, in this thesis it is also my aim to theorise how the themes of violence, religion/faith and gender impact abused women's subjectivity.

1.2 Methodology and Research Questions

In order to conduct this study, I empirically examine how three different centres in São Paulo, Brazil, which provide services to women experiencing violence, frame and negotiate the issues of gender, religion/faith and domestic violence. The centres under study include a 'secular'⁴ centre with a feminist perspective, (the *Women's Collective*), a Catholic-based centre (the *Family Alliance*) and a Pentecostal project (*Project Rahab*). Two of the centres are State-funded CDCMs and are therefore considered branches of the Welfare State, while the third is a private, voluntary-run project run by the Evangelical neo-Pentecostal church 'Universal Church Kingdom of God' or UCKG, known in Portuguese as *Igreja Universal Reino*

⁴ In the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the term secular is defined as "the indifference to, or rejection or exclusion of, religion and religious considerations" (2017). Therefore, a 'secular' centre addressing domestic violence is a centre which does not purport to have aims and values that are based on a faith perspective (i.e. values based on religious doctrine). However, this does not mean that the people working in the centre have no faith themselves, and indeed, the many of the abused women coming to the secular centre in Chapter 5 have some form of faith. It is therefore one of my aim in this study to examine how an ostensibly 'secular' centre addresses religion.

de Deus or *IURD*. However, UCKG's reach across Brazil sometimes makes it a pseudo-state institution in vulnerable areas where the State is nearly absent. In addition, Project Rahab is forming close links to State services and in some areas, becoming part of the State *Women's Services Network*. This therefore raises the issue of the role of both religious and secular organisations in the public sphere, and the ways these different organisations influence social welfare provision, from a gendered perspective.

Methodologically, I focus on the discourses about gender, religion and violence that are represented in institutional documents produced by the centres, on discourses emerging from events at the centres, and on discourses that professionals/leaders and service users engage in, during relatively unstructured interviews. Although the three centres have in common an intent to help and support their female service users, I find that they display very different discourses about gender, race, religion/faith and domestic violence, linked to their secular versus religious (Catholic and Pentecostal) foundations. In turn, these differences are also linked to the offering of differently gendered solutions to the victims of IPV. This leads me to question how religion plays a role in differing gendered understandings of violence.

Furthermore, from a theoretical point of view I draw on feminist, post-structuralist and Foucauldian conceptions of power, discourse and subjectivity, in order to analyse the different positions and negotiations which emerge via the documents, interviews and participant observation. This allows me to theorise the ways in which religion/faith and contested notions of both 'gender' and 'violence' come together to influence the construction of female subjectivity within secular and faith-based domestic violence centres. I therefore

theorise the alternative subjectivities and competing normative ideals of female subjectivity for female victim/survivors of violence in Brazil.

The central questions of this doctoral thesis are:

- 1. In centres aimed at helping survivors of domestic violence, how do the service users and professional staff negotiate religion, violence and gender?**
- 2. What effect do the different discourses on religion, violence and gender have on abused women's sense of identity and subjectivity?**
- 3. How do NGOs and FBOs incorporated into State services influence social welfare provision in terms of women's rights?**

Whilst I set out to answer the first two questions, based on the current dearth of research in this area, the third question derives from the research process itself, as I became aware of the complexities within Brazilian State services and the ways in which NGOs and FBOs are incorporated into welfare services.

In this thesis, I argue that controversy over gender roles and 'how to be woman' is played out in centres which offer help to abused women. Moreover, VAW is often understood as 'domestic violence', but Brazil is a country with high levels of criminal, urban and inter-personal violence occurring in public places, through high rates of theft, mugging, burglary, crimes associated with alcohol and drug misuse, gang violence and violent policing tactics used by the State to combat crime (Moser & McIlwaine, 2006). While this violence affects men as both victims and perpetrators of violence in great numbers, women are also both

directly and indirectly affected by this violence, as victim/survivors or as family members who must pick up the pieces of ruined lives. As my research progressed, I discovered that it was at times difficult to simply apply the term 'domestic violence', when it became clear that lines blurred between the concepts of so-called 'domestic violence' and violence occurring in public spaces.

This blurring adds a particularly unique and under-studied aspect to the project, because I found that the controversies over contested meanings and understandings of both violence and gender fed into larger debates over *who* is to blame for Brazil's high levels of violence. This thesis will demonstrate that the Catholic and Pentecostal organisations under study link urban violence to the breakdown of the family, and place responsibility for the breakdown of the family on women's changing roles in society. This is in opposition to feminist views which see negative economic and social policies as affecting gender relations and hence VAW, exacerbated by patriarchy and women's unequal position in society. These competing visions further demonstrate the importance of the religious-secular debate, often overlooked in the case of VAW, and the political nature of the solutions offered to women who experience male violence. Addressing VAW is about control of women, and the different solutions presented by religious and secular institutions link into the control of gender relations. I will highlight that the 'disciplining' of female behaviour is believed to influence male behaviour, which includes attempting to reduce the violence that men practice in both private and public spaces.

It is my aim in this thesis to demonstrate that responsibility for addressing VAW therefore becomes highly political, as it gives those who address the issue control over women, through

the ability to shape social welfare provision in terms of women's rights, as well as shaping women's understanding of violence, gender roles and relations, sexuality, and ultimately women's sense of identity and subjectivity. Therefore, this thesis offers contributions to theoretical understandings on the relationship between the State, civil society and individuals, and the role of secular and religious approaches to gender and race relations, as well as interpersonal violence. I demonstrate the ways in which such approaches can condition and limit, versus empower and support women's 'independence'. I therefore argue that the question of how violence against women is addressed is highly political, intersected by inequalities of gender, race and class.

This study is a contribution to feminist studies in the field of sociology of religion. Only a small body of research has been conducted examining religion and organisations combating domestic violence (e.g. Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Dobash and Dobash, 1998; French et al., 1998; Frías, 2013; Kapadia, 2003; Mathur, 2004, 2007; Merry, 2001) and a few have conducted studies within secular and Christian-based organisations offering help for victims of domestic violence (e.g. Chong, 2008; Lewy and Dull, 2005; Haaken et al, 2007; Merry, 2001; Nason-Clark, 1997; 2009; Plesset, 2006; Vilhena, 2011). So far, no research has been conducted on this in Brazil, demonstrating a clear need for the present research, as it is an area where there is a dearth of primary data and empirically grounded theorising. More broadly, this thesis also contributes to timely debates on gendered aspects of the role of FBOs in delivering State social services and therefore forms part of wider discussions on religion and secularism in the public sphere, and therefore also makes some contribution to welfare studies. As much of the literature examining the gender, religion, welfare and politics nexus covers matters arising in

the Global North, this thesis also contributes to the lacuna of these themes arising in the Global South.

1.3 Thesis Layout

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature into which this research fits. I begin with an examination of relevant literature on the role of FBOs as actors in welfare services. This literature also helps to situate this study within the growth of studies examining FBOs, welfare and the secular/religious divide. I then move on to a detailed examination of literature on VAW, highlighting the importance of a gender perspective and the use of patriarchy as a framework through which to understand the perceived links between gender-traditional religion, gender inequality and different forms of VAW. In particular, I point to the normative, structural and symbolic forms of violence that religion can foment and then I turn to a review of the current literature on links between religion and VAW, in particular intimate-partner violence (IPV). I examine studies on both secular and religious organisations addressing VAW and demonstrate how the present study fits into this literature. I also address the importance of examining women's agency within gender-traditional religions and point to useful ways in which to conceptualise agency and empowerment.

Chapter 3 sets the scene and explains the Brazilian context by first presenting statistical data on VAW in Brazil and strategies for addressing violence. I then examine the history of women in Brazil and their position in society from the time of colonialism to present day. I highlight the important institutional influences on gender roles and relations, such as military dictatorships, the Catholic Church, the growth of Pentecostalism, as well as the role of

feminism and women's rights. I examine legal and social changes for women as the country moved from dictatorship to democracy, and point to the current, highly inflamed debate over contested notions of gender which are also linked to wider debates over secularism and the role of religion in the public sphere.

In **Chapter 4**, I present my methodology, explaining the theoretical background into which this study fits. As explained in the introduction, this study uses a feminist, post-structuralist methodology and draws on Foucauldian theory of pastoral power (Foucault, 2007 [2004], [1977-78]) and disciplinary institutions (1977) in order to examine the relationship between discourse, subjectivity, and power. In this chapter I also explain and justify my methodological choices, including the methods of participant observation and unstructured, in-depth interviews and the choice of study locations. In the interests of feminist practice, I include a discussion on feminist elements of reflexivity, positionality and research ethics.

In **Chapter 5** I focus on the *Women's Collective*, and examine how professionals within an ostensibly 'secular' centre with a feminist analysis of patriarchy and gender-based inequality as the root cause of domestic violence, negotiate religion/faith, gender and violence with abused women. I highlight the centre's explicit focus on breaking down Christo-religious analyses of gender, which the centre views as sometimes negative in relation to pious women caught in violent relationships. This chapter demonstrates the way in which secular professionals use theological arguments with feminist interpretations of religion, in order to better communicate with women of faith. A key finding in this chapter is that both women of faith and 'secular' professionals discover that it is not religion *per se* which allows for situations of violence, it is the patriarchal way in which religion is taught in some churches

and used as a method for controlling women. I also argue that in this centre, battered women develop the concept of 'becoming feminist' as a strategy for reducing the violence they experience, leading to an understanding of violence as both personal and political.

In **Chapter 6**, I examine an FBO offering welfare services to abused women. I find that because the concept of gender roles and relations is understood from a Catholic standpoint based on Liberation Theology, this influences the way in which women are 'treated' and offered solutions to IPV. I demonstrate that the centre places great emphasis on the role of the mother in cases of domestic violence, holding her responsible for raising violent men. Women are therefore encouraged to examine their own behaviour in relation to domestic violence, and equal emphasis is laid on female violence towards men. I also highlight how the centre has introduced the strategy of mediation between couples, in order to reduce domestic violence while still maintaining the family. I argue that this gives women few possibilities of empowerment and ability to negotiate the violence in their lives. On the other hand, this centre is one of the few places in the country attempting to involve men in discussions of VAW.

Chapter 7 looks at the activism of the *Women's Ministry* at UCKG under the program *Project Rahab*. I demonstrate the highly-gendered nature of the programs available to men and women attending UCKG, which focus on traditional understandings of gender roles and of women as submissive to their husbands who are the head of the family. The church links domestic violence to the changing nature of gender relations and women's expectations that men should help in the home which causes domestic conflict. Here, women are taught to

reduce conflict by rediscovering their 'femininity' and self-worth. Using Foucault's concept of pastoral power (Foucault, 2007, [2004] [1977-1978]), I demonstrate the ways in which the women attending the centre are formed into gendered, Pentecostal subjects, by focusing on the relationship between mentors and mentees. I also argue that this process of subjectification has important racial connotations which are not to be overlooked. This project demonstrates a 'grey' area of cooperation between the state and churches such as UCKG, which appear to work alongside State women's services in some states of Brazil.

Shifting the focus to a more theoretical lens of analysis, I argue in the concluding **Chapter 8** that Project Rahab and the CDCMs under study can essentially be viewed as disciplinary centres (Foucault, 1977; Westlund, 1999) which influence battered women's subjectivity, shaping women according to their own ideals of womanhood. I argue that responsibility for addressing VAW therefore becomes highly political, as it gives organisations who address the issue control over women. It also allows different organisations to shape social welfare provision in relation to women's rights, by shaping women's understanding of violence, gender roles and relations, and ultimately women's sense of identity and subjectivity. In this chapter, I also highlight interesting links on different religious and secular attitudes towards urban and domestic violence. The fundamental religious/secular schism over the nature and concept of gender is therefore strongly linked to conceptions of the family and control over women's gendered behaviour, meaning that it has long-lasting, social and political ramifications. In addition, debates over VAW in the public sphere allow the different organisations involved greater socio-cultural and political legitimacy. I contend that regardless of whether the aim is to depoliticise or politicise violence, addressing IPV *is* political, because it is linked to the control of women, and their way of understanding and

interacting with the world, which is heavily gendered. This thesis therefore reveals that women's roles are considered crucial to the relationship between urban and domestic forms of violence, which means that addressing VAW is deeply political, linked to contested notions of both 'violence' and 'gender', which ultimately structure the way societies function.

CHAPTER TWO: FBOS, PATRIARCHY, GENDER-TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS AND VAW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter forms a review of the current literature, examining the research areas to which this thesis contributes. As explained in Chapter 1, this thesis contributes to feminist studies in the sociology of religion, in particular on a macro level by 1) taking a gendered perspective to examine the role of NGOs and FBOs in providing welfare services to women. On a micro level, 2) the thesis contributes by examining the ways in which religion is negotiated by both women experiencing violence and the professional staff working in centres which help such women. Furthermore, I use a feminist post-structuralist methodology of analysis and ideas from the 'Foucauldian toolbox' in order to theorise how faith is used to create different and gendered understandings of violence, which thereby impact the ways in which abused women understand their sense of identity and subjectivity, in turn affecting the way the women address the violence in their lives. This means that I also contribute to Foucauldian and feminist studies on the construction of the female subject, and in particular, the role of religion, gender and violence in the construction of female subjectivity.

In Section 2.2 I begin with an examination of the complexities around the issues of FBOs as providers of social welfare, and demonstrate how this thesis adds to gaps in current research by examining not only FBOs but also the ways in which religion is negotiated in an ostensibly

‘secular’ NGO. In section 2.3 I then turn to the current literature on VAW, the different forms violence can take, highlighting especially intimate partner violence (IPV), the effects that violence has on women’s health and wellbeing, and some of the factors which appear to increase the risks of violence. I address the fundamental contribution that feminist literature has had in studies of violence by underscoring the importance of social constructions of gender and the impact on gender roles, gender relations and gendered identities.

I then begin to build up the concept of patriarchy as a useful framework in the context of VAW in Section 2.4, as it highlights both the structural and ideological, systematic subordination of women by men (Hunnicut, 2009). I point out that patriarchy serves to highlight the ‘unseen’ forms of violence that are perpetrated against women through symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001 [1998]; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004), structural violence (Galtung, 1969; Boesten, 2014) and normative violence (Butler, 2004; Boesten, 2014). These ‘invisible’ forms of violence help to build up a picture of indirect forms of GBV which can be linked to religion through beliefs, practices and the structures of religious organisations which perpetuate unequal gender teachings. In addition, Patriarchy helps to highlight the ways in which conservative forms of Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism can create complex situations in which women of faith struggle to deal with male IPV, and I examine literature addressing religion and domestic violence. I then also examine literature addressing faith-based and secular approaches to domestic violence, where this thesis is situated. I note, however, that women within gender-traditional religions are not without agency and I highlight the myriad ways that women of faith use to address patriarchy within their faith. Section 2.5 provides concluding remarks.

2.2 Complexities around Faith-Based Organisations as Providers of Social Welfare

One of the broader aspects of this research is that it fits into the growth of studies on the role of FBOs in providing state services (e.g. see Biebricher, 2011; Chaves, 1999; Connolly, 2008; Ghatak and Abel, 2013; Mead, 1997, 2005a, 2005b; Sager, 2010; Wineburg, 2007 for US studies, and Nesti, 2002; Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh & Petterson, 2010, for EU studies). As yet, however, there is little research in this area concerning Brazil (for exceptions see Mariz, 1992; Mourier, 2013; Pierrucci, 1996). Moreover, few studies on FBOs have taken into account a gendered perspective (for exception see Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh & Petterson, 2010; Østebø, Haukanes & Blystad, 2013), which demonstrates the need for the present research.

In Brazil, FBO studies so far have focused on issues such as the social justice work of the progressive Catholic Church and its base communities (CEBs) (*Comunidades Eclesiásticas de Base*), prominent in the 1970s-1990s (see Mariz, 1992; Shupe and Misztal, 1998; Drogus, 1997; Drogus and Gambino, 2005). There is also considerable literature on the growth of Protestantism, especially Pentecostalism, (see Burdick, 1996; Brusco, 1993; Chesnut, 2003; Lehman, 1996; Martin, 1993; Stoll, 1990 Mariz, 1992; Mariz and Machado, 1997; Smilde, 2007 among many). However, much of this work focuses on the 'benefits' of religious conversion for both men and women (e.g. Brusco, 1993; Chesnut, 2003; Smilde, 2007) and some investigations have also highlighted differences between the progressive Catholic Church and Pentecostal Churches in helping the poor and overcoming their predicaments (Mariz, 1992).

According to Beckford (2011), discussions of religious organisations as social welfare providers underscore the way in which ‘faith’ has become a political resource and how governments have come to see “religion as expedient” (59). This refers to “policies and practices that acknowledge the potential of drawing on religious resources to solve problems” (ibid). Hjelm (2015) points out that as Europe increasingly embraces austerity measures and other neo-liberal policies, the role of religious communities in welfare provision and social integration has become more pertinent. However, he has called for a critical approach to religion as expedient, pointing out what he called “the little-examined, unexpected consequences of these increased State-religion partnerships” (2015:9).

For example, feminist researchers such as Sheila Jeffreys (2011) argue that religions should not be included in government consultations or given contracts for the delivery of public services because “religions are usually discriminatory with respect to gender and equality” (364). This is because religious NGOs that partner with the State are supposed to support State values, aid in community integration and not infringe the rights of citizens. But a State focus on gender equality can lead to tensions with conservative faith-based providers. For example, in their study of Norwegian FBOs, Østebø, Haukanes & Blystad, (2013) found clear tensions between faith-based service providers and women’s empowerment programmes. In this case, the FBOs in question felt pressured to comply with State policies to continue receiving aid.

On the other hand, Aune and Nyhagen (2015) encourage research into the ways in which religious stakeholders and actors (e.g churches), faith-based and secular voluntary organisations mobilise in relation to gender equality and women’s rights issues, because they

argue that a universal rejection of religion generalises all religions and does not take into account historical, political and socio-economic contexts. Neither does it consider religious women's groups working to change gender relations from within their religion; or the ways in which women in gender-conservative religions find ways to circumvent patriarchal gender relations (Aune and Nyhagen, 2015). The present research therefore addresses their call for studies into both secular and faith-based organisations which mobilise in relation to women's rights issues, in this case, the issue of VAW.

Examining Brazil, Mourier (2013) found that the growth of religious entities contracted by the state of São Paulo in order to provide 'public' services had grown dramatically over the last few years. This growth looks set to continue due to the state evidently being overwhelmed or even absent in many vulnerable areas (85). Mourier (2013) found that public-religious partnerships represented almost a third of all partnerships signed by the Secretary of Social Assistance in 2010 and accounted for nearly half of all public-private partnerships in the Health sector (85). This begs the question: What does the growth in FBOs in social welfare means for citizens' rights, especially when looked at through the prism of gender relations and women's rights in particular?

2.2.1 FBOs and Development

Literature examining FBOs within development is relevant to this study because it highlights some of the appraisals and criticisms of FBOs (e.g. Deneulin & Radoki, 2011; Ferris, 2005; Jones & Petersen, 2011; Marshall & Keough, 2004; Rick, 2011). For example, some development researchers argue that religious organisations have strengths and qualities that secular organisations do not (Ferris, 2005; Marshall and Keough, 2004). They claim that

religious organisations often enjoy considerable support and trust among the poorest, because religious organisations reach the poor at the grassroots and speak their language (ibid). This is because churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship are often the focal points for the communities they serve and the powerful motivating force of religion can facilitate the recruitment of volunteers (Jones and Petersen, 2011). This is certainly the case in Brazil's low-income, urban peripheries, where churches, temples and religious organisations have a strong presence and are often considered to be the only organisations offering constructive alternatives in crime-riddled areas (Ventura, 1994).

However, in a review of the literature on religion and development, Jones and Petersen criticise the research, calling it "instrumental, narrow and normative" (2011:1296). The authors argue that FBOs are the main object of research and the focus is on religion as institutions and organisations, rather than on ritual, tradition or inner beliefs (ibid:1298). The authors also argue that the term 'FBO' essentially lumps together a wide variety of organisations (e.g. large, small, volunteer, professional, local and international), based on preconceived definitions of religion. Finally, they find that very little research appears to analyse the different ways in which faith or religion is signified and practised in these organisations and they add that there is much less reflection on the role of religion in ostensibly non-religious organisations (Jones and Petersen, 2011). This research therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining the way religion and gender are negotiated in ostensibly 'secular' organisations (Chapter 5). In addition, I highlight the way both the professionals and the service users in all the fieldwork locations negotiate gendered aspects of religion and faith in their lives (Chapters 5, 6, 7).

FBOs and Gender

As Deneulin & Radoki (2011) point out, the importance of religion or faith in development work is increasingly being recognised in the literature, as well as by funding agencies and governments, who have all indicated a greater willingness to partner with faith-based initiatives. For example, the UK, Swedish and Dutch governments have all allocated funds for the exploration of religion in relation to development (James, 2011). In addition, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) committed to a budgetary increase allocated specifically for faith-based groups (DFID, 2009; Mitchell, 2012). Research has addressed the role of FBOs and their work on HIV and AIDS, which also has implications around concepts of gender and sexuality (e.g. Francis, 2009; Haddad, 2002; Coleman, 2004; Parker, 2001 among many others). This literature is well-developed in Brazil, which has been a major player in the global AIDS policy arena and a leader in the fight to consider access to HIV medication a human right (e.g. Galvão, 1997; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2011; Parker, 2003).

There is a growing body of research examining complexities between FBOs and GBV, although the majority focus on countries in Africa (e.g. Kamanga, 2014; Le Roux, 2013, 2014, 2015, Le Roux & Niyonizigiye, 2011; Le Roux et al., 2016; Ngwa, 2007; Petersen, 2009; Solarsh & Frankel, 2004; Wangiru & Chitando, 2013); as well as on Asia-Pacific (Bradley, 2010, 2011; Kaybryn & Nidadavolu, 2012; Loots, 2016). A report mapping FBOs and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the Asia-Pacific Region identified 58 FBOs responding to VAWG and noted this was only a small proportion of the FBOs addressing GBV in the region (Kaybryn & Nidadavolu, 2012). In this context, faith sector engagement is recognised as a double-edged sword, because on the one hand, faith leaders have the influence and potential for addressing GBV, as they are understood to be gatekeepers of local communities, with considerable

influence on their community's beliefs and behaviours (Haddad, 2002; Solarsh & Frankel, 2004, Tomkins et al., 2015).

On the other hand, faith leaders can act as barriers to GBV responses because they can be apathetic, with little or no commitment to empowering women and promoting gender equality (Clark & Jennings, 2008). They can be undereducated or misinformed, and reinforce harmful myths or disinformation (Thomson, 2014), and as products of their particular culture and context, they can perpetuate harmful cultural beliefs and practices (ibid). Bradley (2010) argues that the use of religion within development continues to present significant barriers to social equality and justice, particularly for women. However, when examining women-only ritual spaces, she finds that religion can also be a social and spiritual space where women work through their problems both internally and with others. Little research has explored the roles of FBOs and VAW in Brazil, demonstrating the need for the present research, although de Roure & Capraro (2016) highlight the work of the ecumenical organisation *Koinonia* and the Anglican project *SADD*. The authors argue that these organisations, which aim to develop gender equality within religious contexts and heighten awareness of religious texts that legitimize VAW, are important initiatives in the context of Brazil's increasing religious conservatism, which will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 3.

It is my aim in this research to examine two FBOs – one State-funded and part of welfare services, and one a private Pentecostal program, in order to take a gendered perspective on how they address VAW and to examine how faith, violence and gender are addressed in the centres. The third centre is NGO/state-funded and not outwardly faith-based, but my aim is to examine how religion is addressed in this centre, as well as using a gendered lens to

examine understandings of violence. I aim to contribute new knowledge on gendered aspects of the workings of FBOs and NGOs in Brazil, as well as the ways in which faith is negotiated in faith-based and ostensibly 'secular' organisations. I now turn to an examination of current research on VAW, highlighting the importance of a gender perspective and the role of patriarchy as a useful framework through which to understand the ways in which gender-traditional religions can potentially foment situations in which forms of VAW might occur.

2.3 Research on Violence Against Women

The United Nations (UN) defines VAW as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993).

VAW therefore includes physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state in any situation, within spousal or non-spousal relations and violence committed at home, work, within institutions or in public (UN, 1993). This definition means that VAW includes violence perpetrated against women whether the perpetrator is known or unknown, whether it takes place inside the home, outside in public or within institutions. The perpetrator could be one person, several or an organisational body such as an institution. Also, the violence could be a visible act such as hitting, slapping, kicking or less visible acts, including sexual violence, harassment, and coercion, psychological harm or deprivation of liberty.

However, research shows that women are at greater risk of being physically or sexually abused by an intimate partner than by any other perpetrator (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Jewkes, 2002; RHR & WHO, 2013). Intimate partner violence (IPV), falls within the categories of what is also known as family violence, wife battering and domestic violence. The terms “domestic” and “family” violence are widely used in literature, the media and policy documents, but they are contested because they include other forms of family-based violence, e.g. against children or elderly, and multiple possible perpetrators – siblings, extended family members, parents. According to some feminist researchers, these terms deny the gender political and structural aspect of IPV, and perpetuate the idea of violence against women as a private affair (Boesten, 2014; Scheper-Hughes, 1993).

The WHO has called VAW a global concern and described it as a major health problem. Research into IPV has highlighted links with acute and chronic health problems such as severe headaches, stomach ulcers, coronary heart disease and pain syndromes (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007; Campbell et al., 2002; Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, Garcia-Moreno, Team et al. 2008; Plichta, 2004; Vives-Cases, Ruiz-Cantero, Escribà-Agüir, & Miralles, 2011). In addition, there are sexual and reproductive health consequences, including sexually transmitted diseases, miscarriages and unintended pregnancies, among other problems (Campbell et al., 2002; Johri et al., 2011; Sarkar, 2008). IPV has also been associated with mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and memory loss, as well as increased levels of reliance on alcohol and drugs (Campbell et al., 2002; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Ludermir, Schraiber, D’Oliveira, & França, 2008; Sarkar, 2008). Women who experience IPV are also more likely to have a violent death

through homicide or suicide (Campbell et al., 2002; Devries et al., 2011; Garcia, Soria, & Hurwitz, 2007).

Numerous studies have highlighted potential risk factors for IPV which include the woman and her partner's age, educational level, number of children, alcohol and drug use as well as childhood experiences of violence (Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Heise et al., 1999; Jewkes, 2002; McQuestion, 2003). Many studies focus on links between IPV and poverty which are commonly believed to be universal predictors of violence (Benson, Fox, Maris, & Wyk, 2004; Benson, Woodredge, Thistlethwaite, & Fox, 2004; Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Wyk, 2002; Goodman, Smyth, Borges, & Singer, 2009; Kishor & Johnson, 2006; Miles-Doan, 1998; O'Campo et al., 1995; Sutherland, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2001). However, these studies show mixed results and factors including income, male unemployment, women's educational attainment, men's education, couple relative educational level, financial disparity and poverty indices are not positively associated with IPV in all research sites (Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2002; Kishor & Johnson, 2006; Vyas & Watts, 2008). This suggests that while IPV is a global phenomenon, the underlying reasons for it vary according to location, and must therefore be influenced by local context, culture and beliefs around gender roles and behaviour.

Research has also pointed out that resource distribution and family power imbalances can either lead to or protect individuals from IPV (Browning, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2002; Oduro, Deere & Catanzarite, 2015; Panda and Agarwal, 2005; Resko, 2010; Vyas & Watts, 2008). For example, women who are economically dependent on their partners are believed to be more at risk of IPV because their lack of financial resources makes it difficult to leave an abusive

relationship (Vyas & Watts, 2008). In addition, women who become economically empowered but who have more gender-conservative partners are deemed to be at increased risk of violence as they become less willing to conform to patriarchal norms in the household (ibid). However, Jewkes et al. (2002) suggested that women in low-income households where both partners depend on external sources of money might be less exposed to domestic violence because there were fewer conflicts over household finances.

Furthermore, Panda and Agarwal (2005) demonstrated that in Kerala, India, women's ownership of the home or agricultural land is a deterrent to both physical and psychological abuse. Similarly, a study in the US suggested that female home ownership reduced the woman's likelihood of being subject to physical abuse (Resko, 2010). Oduro, Deere and Catanzarite (2015) went beyond the concept of the wife's ownership of assets to consider the value of the wife's holdings compared to her partner's. The authors found that in Ecuador, women's share of couple's wealth was a significant deterrent to physical but not emotional violence. In Ghana, they found the opposite was true, with women's share of wealth reducing emotional but not physical violence. The researchers therefore argue that a focus on intra-household bargaining power is important for the study of domestic violence, but that a woman's share of couple wealth "is not a magic bullet to deterring it" (2015:27) because *context* matters.

As demonstrated through the research above, studies on abuse have classically focused on individual or relationship level factors to the exclusion of factors operating at a broader societal level, perhaps partly because the links between interpersonal and situational factors with IPV have been more clearly identified (Kiss et al, 2012). However, the focus on context

led Heise et al, (1999) and Heise & Gottmoeller (2002) to highlight the importance of the 'ecological model' of IPV research, which considers wider social and contextual variables (e.g. neighbourhood characteristics, social disadvantage, street violence and crime) and pays particular attention to the expression and influence of gender norms.

Taking into account context is salient in the case of Brazil, as the statistics demonstrate that the country has extremely high levels of interpersonal violence occurring in both public and private spheres, with many low-income urban areas experiencing severe forms of social disadvantage, street violence and crime (Waiselfisz, 2012a, 2012b). Interestingly, however, a study conducted by Kiss et al. (2012), investigated the link between social context and IPV in São Paulo, Brazil. The researchers found that women's risk of IPV did *not* vary across neighbourhoods nor was it influenced by the women's individual socioeconomic characteristics. Instead, the study found that the partner's behaviour, such as excessive alcohol use, controlling behaviour and multiple sexual partnerships were important predictors of IPV. In addition, the woman's likelihood of IPV also increased if her mother had experienced IPV or if the woman herself used alcohol excessively. Researchers also noted that women in the middle range of the socio-economic scale were significantly more likely to report having experienced violence by a partner.

According to the authors, the findings suggest that although the characteristics of people living in deprived neighbourhoods may influence the probability that a woman will experience IPV, dynamics associated with the neighbourhood context do not seem to affect this risk. Therefore, the researchers argue that while poverty reduction will improve the lives of individuals in many ways, strategies to reduce IPV *should prioritize shifting norms that*

reinforce certain negative male behaviours (Kiss et al, 2012). This clearly points to the importance of the study of gender roles and gender relations impacting the incidence of VAW. Feminists have led the way in this field and gender theory has been useful in developing nuanced understandings and definitions of IPV and VAW which have come to be understood as forms of gender-based violence (GBV), explained below.

2.3.1 VAW as GBV

The UN's definition of VAW at the beginning of this chapter includes "any act of *gender-based violence* that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women (UN, 1993). GBV is violence expressed against an individual or a population based on gender identity or expression (Wies & Haldane, 2011). This occurs in the family, general community and includes violence that is perpetrated or condoned by the state. Its multiple forms of violence reflect political-economic structures that perpetuate gender-based inequality (ibid). VAW is therefore a form of GBV, perpetrated against women because of their gender and is understood as violence that results from power inequalities based on gender roles (ibid).

Early feminist research into VAW began in the 1970s and 1980s with Brownmiller's (1975) pioneering research on rape and Kelly's (1988) 'continuum of violence'. Kelly (1988) identified a range of interactions and abusive behaviour alongside behaviour readily recognised as 'violence', which she argued was part of a continuum of violent behaviour that normalises women as sexualised objects. Feminist literature has highlighted that VAW is often presented as different both in theory and in practice from other forms of violence dominated by male victims (e.g. Stanko, 1994; Wilding, 2012). Researchers have shown that violence against men

and women does not occur in the same way: while men are killed predominantly in the street and may be oblivious to the identity of their attacker, women are most likely to be physically harmed or even killed within their home, at the hands of their current or ex-partner (e.g. Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013; RHR & WHO, 2013). Some research has put high levels of male violence towards women down to the weakening of male power over women due to women's increased participation in the labour market, leading to increased confidence in women and less financial dependence on men (e.g. Bourgois, 1996). Combined with lack of employment opportunities for low-income males and the ready availability of firearms in Brazil, this could partly explain some of the violence, but it has also been critiqued as too simplistic and one-sided because it does not account for all the different forms of violence that women suffer (Pearson, 2000).

Before feminist campaigning, while violence occurring in public spaces was openly discussed, violence occurring in 'private' spaces was therefore considered 'domestic' violence and seen as a family matter, in which outsiders should not become involved. Feminist scholarship pointed out that this traditional division between public and private realms greatly increased inequality within gender relations by making it invisible, silencing women's victimisation and creating widespread tolerance for this social problem (Craske, 1999; Hume, 2008). In addition, Scheper-Hughes (1993) points out that the complicated matter of 'naming' and defining violence sometimes limits understanding of the forms of abuse experienced. For example, research has demonstrated that women are often unable to see acts of aggression against them as violent acts, because of the context in which they occur (i.e. an intimate relationship) (Schraiber et. al, 2003). Therefore, 'violence' is often considered to be what occurs between and towards men, while interpersonal acts of aggression, especially within the private sphere

of the home, are sometimes understood differently (ibid). It also is important to note that men prosecuted for attacking women are usually portrayed as monsters, while research has proven that women are almost always harmed by ordinary men who are not characterised as presenting a criminal threat to women (Stanko, 2003). This realisation has led to an important question within feminism, regarding what is 'normal' behaviour for men and women in relation to their use and experience of violence (ibid).

However, Hume (2008) argues that gendered violence occurs both in public and in private spheres, but that it is cultural attitudes towards gendered behaviour that minimize 'private' violence, ultimately creating an ideological but not spatial distinction. Hume (2008) also points out that the normalisation of inter-personal violence means that it is considered women's responsibility to protect themselves, and the discourse around strongly violent acts such as rape is often minimised by society, placing the blame on women for dressing provocatively. An example from Brazil exemplifies the belief in norms of gendered behaviour: in a study on the social attitudes towards VAW by the 'Social Perception Indicator System', *Sistema de Indicadores de Percepção Social (SIPS)*, just over a quarter of respondents (26 per cent) agreed fully or partially that women who wear revealing clothing deserved to be attacked (SIPS/IPEA, 2014). Although 58 per cent disagreed with this statement, the number of those who agreed is certainly significant. Also, 58 per cent of those interviewed agreed with the statement "if women knew how to behave properly, there would be less rapes" (SIPS/IPEA, 2014), clearly putting the blame for sexual violence on women and excusing male violence against women. Attitudes such as these link into patriarchal and cultural beliefs around male and female sexuality and link into Judith Butler's (2004) concept of *normative violence*.

Normative Violence

Normative violence is not directly a form of physical violence, but it can result in physical violence when people are harmed for not conforming to the 'norm' (Butler, 2004, in Boesten, 2014). This physical violence is simultaneously made invisible, because it is either unseen, unperceived and not socially understood as violence, and/or it is tolerated and seen as normal in light of social transgressions, such as women dressing provocatively and therefore 'asking' to be raped.

Relating normative violence to VAW, Boesten (2014) points out that the ubiquity of VAW and the lack of public outcry and interventions suggest that VAW in intimate relationships is normalised. For example, men often excuse beatings and rape in marriage because they say that the woman was not acting in certain ways deemed feminine or was failing to perform certain tasks (e.g. domestic chores) (Boesten, 2014). This suggests that physical punishment is often seen as 'the norm' for not meeting certain gendered expectations. Therefore, it is hard for women to break free from violent relationships when the violence is seen as normal, or is perhaps not recognised as violence, because it is embedded in gender norms (ibid).

Normative violence can also be seen through physical violence against members of the LGBTI community. Brazil is ranked highest in the world for the murder of transsexual women (TGEU, 2016) which highlights widespread tolerance for violence against persons perceived to be socially transgressing gender norms and against whom physical violence is normalised. Boesten's argument is helpful for understanding potential reasons for the high levels of VAW

in Brazil, where feminists argue this has been normalised since Brazil's violent process of colonisation from the 1500s onwards⁵ (e.g. Marcílio, 1993).

Now, I turn to the concept of patriarchy as an important tool for understanding VAW, which also allows us to examine the complex links between gender-conservative religions and VAW.

2.4 Patriarchy: A Framework for Understanding VAW

Feminists argue that patriarchal power is derived from the social meanings given to biological sexual difference, whereby men and women are believed to be fit for different social tasks based on their sex (Weedon, 1997, [1987]). This allows for a sexual division of labour, the social organisation of production and reproduction and the creation of norms of femininity and masculinity (ibid). Patriarchal discourse is formed in relation to a norm that is male, and female nature and social roles are defined in relation to this norm, which allows for the construction of women as the 'other' because they are not the male 'norm' (Beauvoir, 1997 [1949]). Patriarchy highlights women's roles as wife and mother and calls for certain qualities deemed particularly feminine, such as patience, emotion and self-sacrifice, which in turn structure women's access to the labour market and public life (Weedon, 1997:1).

The concept of 'patriarchy' was heavily contested in the '80s and '90s, with Kandioyti (1988) suggesting that it was simplistic and under-theorised because it did not address women's roles in reproducing it. Others criticised the way it had been developed with a Western focus

⁵ This will be examined further in Chapter 3.

on men's horizontal brotherhood and rule over women (Pateman, 1988), and as Eurocentric (Yuval-Davis, 1997) because it did not sufficiently consider other, intersecting inequalities such as women ruling over other women and men ruling over other men, especially in post-colonial societies. However, Hunnicutt (2009) argues convincingly for patriarchy as a useful theoretical concept in the case of VAW because it serves to highlight the structural, ideological and systematic subordination of women by men. Hunnicutt's framework addresses the criticisms levied at it and develops a more nuanced concept of patriarchy which considers historical variety, and intersecting inequalities that affect and structure gendered outcomes. Hunnicutt highlights the ways in which patriarchal systems are based on hierarchical domination which intersect with other hierarchical divisions, e.g. race, class, and age and she points out that patriarchal ideology can persist despite, or in conjunction with gains in gender equality.

Patriarchy is a useful concept for Latin America in general and Brazil specifically, as it helps to highlight the historically male-centred and sexist organisation of State, its institutions and society, and goes some way towards explaining the tolerance for high levels of VAW, as well as a lacking State response. Moreover, the concept of patriarchy also serves to highlight how gender-traditional religions, e.g. religions such as Catholicism, conservative Protestantism, Orthodox Judaism, Mormonism, and some sects of Islam, which promote strict gender relationships based on male headship and women's submission, can – albeit unwittingly – foment situations in which GBV occurs. Although these religions can vary significantly in doctrine and practice, they tend to understand gender roles in similar ways (Burke, 2012).

2.4.1 Patriarchy and Gender-Traditional Religions

Within gender-traditional religions such as Catholicism and conservative Protestantism (the religions under study in this thesis), gender begins and ends with biology (e.g. see Juschka, 2001; Bayes and Tohidi, 2001; Cady and Fessenden, 2013). Male and female are perceived as categories of sex difference, which are then played out in the philosophical and the metaphysical, prescribing how these differences should be read (Juschka, 2001). For example, rationality is seen as the domain of men (politics, economics, history, philosophy) because of its supposed 'maleness', while irrationality is seen as the domain of women (emotionality, childbearing, childrearing, superstition) because of its supposed 'femaleness' (ibid). Activities, roles and social locations that are produced within the social domain are naturalised and made to appear as though they are not a product of social relations (which have been constructed hierarchically and oppressively), but instead are found in 'nature' (Juschka, 2001). Within conservative, gender-traditional religions, the man is seen as the head of the family, the breadwinner and decision-maker, while women are child-bearers and homemakers, subservient and submissive to their husbands in the interests of a peaceful family life (Nason-Clark, 1997).

Juschka (2001) points out that feminists – both feminists of faith and those who do not profess a religion: because the two are not mutually exclusive – have demonstrated how religion is often invoked in order to support male supremacy. Feminists have highlighted the sexism of official religious doctrine and institutions which often insist that women cannot hold positions of authority in the same capacity as men, which also leads to the structural maintenance of male control over women. Examples of early feminism in religion include Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* (1895) and since then many well-known, contemporary

feminists have proposed new readings and interpretations of theology and 'sacred' texts to increase women's visibility in religious traditions (Juschka, 2001). Women studying Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism among others began to write feminist critiques of androcentric and often misogynist texts, and developed feminist hermeneutics in order to challenge systems of oppression located in religious beliefs and practices (e.g. see Leila Ahmed, 1989; Gloria Anzaldua, 1981; Mieke Bal, 1987; Carol Christ, 1987; Mary Daly, 1968, 1986; Naomi Goldenberg, 1979; Sherry Ortner, 1976; Judith Plaskow, 1991; Rosemary Radford Ruether, 1983 among many others).

Through feminist analysis and interpretation, scholars of religion have questioned the ways women are presented in religious texts as well as their frequent absence in the texts. For example, in one re-reading by the feminist theologian Mary Daly in *Beyond God the Father* (1973), Daly analyses the Genesis 2 creation story, suggesting that the notion of 'woman born of man' is intended as a reversal to appropriate women's power of creation by placing it in the hands of man and a male deity (Daly, 1973 in Juschka, 2001). This is because the text locates the first act of creation with a male god, thereby associating maleness with divinity. In addition, Daly demonstrates how the story of Adam and Eve is used to demonstrate divine legitimacy of male dominance over female subordination. This is because Eve is read as the cause of Adam's downfall and subsequently the reason for all of humanity's suffering. The first woman and therefore the representative of all women is subjugated to Adam's will by deity because of her failure. The story also reads that Eve was brought second into this world as Adam's helpmate, which suggests that it was the deity's will to make Eve (and by extension all women), second to and lesser than Adam. Daly argues that in this story the male point of

view is metamorphosed into a god's point of view in order to justify patriarchal culture (Daly, 1973: 1-12; 44-68 in Juschka, 2001).

There are now many re-readings of the Bible and the Koran which challenge male views of women, especially regarding female sexuality, in order to reconceive and reconstruct masculinist interpretations. However, these reconstructions are an uphill struggle within patriarchal religions that have for centuries perpetuated ideals of male supremacy and female subservience. Furthermore, by reinforcing gender inequality gender-traditional religions can perpetuate 'unseen' forms of violence, which have gendered impacts. These are forms of *structural violence* (Galtung, 1969) and *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu, 2001 [1998]; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004), explained below.

2.4.2 Structural and Symbolic Violence

Structural violence is defined as the avoidable impairment of human needs through forms of structural, economic and political violence, due to sharp inequalities within countries and their institutions (Galtung, 1969). This includes violence through unfavourable economic policies, corruption, lack of access to decent health care, poor education, racism and classism. Structural violence reinforces institutionalised inequality and vice versa. Therefore, in the case of patriarchal, conservative, gender-traditional religions, women can experience structural violence because they are not permitted equal status (theologically) or equal positions to men in the actual, male-dominated structure of the Church. This affects women in their daily lives because they are sometimes seen as 'less' than men, or it compounds a belief that women's main abilities lie in reproduction and childrearing, rather in the job market or in positions of power.

Another form of 'unseen' GBV which is perpetrated against women is the concept of *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu, 2001 [1998]; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004). This is where deeply entrenched inequalities, constantly reproduced by institutions such as the State, religion, and educational systems, as well as by the family, are all accepted as the natural order. Bourdieu and Bourdieu and Wacquant (Bourdieu, 2001 [1998]; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004), referred to gender domination as a form of symbolic violence whereby "male order is so deeply grounded as to need no justification: it imposes itself as self-evident, universal" (2004: 273). This domination is so deeply entrenched in the minds of both men and women that the majority believe that these structures exist without questioning them. Bourdieu and Wacquant understand gender domination as "an imprisonment effected via the body" (2004: 273). Symbolic violence therefore occurs through the social construction of the vision of biological sex which legitimises male domination over women and imposes different characteristics and ways of acting over each sex, through which their masculinity or femininity is expressed.

Symbolic violence is also experienced without recognising it as violence, because it is created through the acceptance of unequal structures that are taken for granted, essentially accepting the world as it is without question. This "misrecognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004: 272) of violence means that it simultaneously occurs with the tacit acceptance or "complicity" (ibid) of the person upon whom the violence is being inflicted, because they do not recognise it as such. As the dominated – i.e. women – make sense of their world from the point of view of the dominant, which makes the relations of domination appear natural. Women are the embodied form of the relation of domination and this relation is further naturalised and confirmed by other "unthought schemata (...) in the form of paired couples (high/low,

large/small, inside/outside, straight/crooked, etc)” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004: 273). Therefore, the concept of male/female, dominant/submissive is naturalised and reinforced through what appears to be the natural coupling of opposites.

The theory of symbolic violence goes some way towards explaining why women are often attracted to powerful, dominant and sometimes violent men. It is important to note that women are often ‘blamed’ for remaining in a violent relationship or somehow it is assumed that if they remain they must ‘like’ getting hit (Nason-Clark, 1997). But Bourdieu’s theory demonstrates that their intimate relationship has been built with the help of institutions that have constantly reinforced structures of domination: a relationship that a woman entered understanding, in most cases perhaps unconsciously, that her role was to be submissive to her partner. Therefore, if validation of a woman’s social being is based on her partner’s, and there is an internalised belief that the man has the more dominant role, then he also has more authority in his words and actions. Following the theory of symbolic violence, as women are encouraged to be submissive and understand themselves in relation to men, and therefore have less authority and are less sure of their words and actions, then even leaving a violent partner is extremely hard to do, not least because women are not used to being in control. Symbolic violence is therefore helpful in understanding gender domination and the generally unseen, naturalised forms of power, domination and control that are exerted over women through gender inequality.

Furthermore, symbolic violence links to religion, especially in the context of Catholicism and conservative Protestantism in Brazil, because of the important role these religions have played and continue to play in shaping gender roles and relations, within institutions and in

politics and society. According to Rey (2013, [2007]), Bourdieu wrote little positive related to religion, as he subscribed to the Weberian belief of a decline of religion linked to processes of modernisation. Bourdieu viewed God as a socially constructed illusion and religion as “an ultimately unnecessary system of symbolic meaning that serves chiefly to perpetuate social domination by duping people into accepting their stations in society as somehow being natural, or, worse still, divinely sanctioned” (Rey, 2013:6). For Bourdieu, clearly, the gender domination in Catholicism and conservative Protestantism, in which women are perceived as submissive to men, is a form of symbolic violence and reinforces such violence throughout society, providing one of the main catalysts for gender domination.

Linking Structural, Symbolic and Normative Violence

It is important to note that not all domination relies on internalised subjectivities, as actual structures, legal provisions, norms and values are also complicit, which is why other theories of violence, e.g. Butler’s *normative violence* and Galtung’s *structural violence*, also help to demonstrate the ‘unseen’ forms of GBV. Taken together, these three theories help to highlight the ways in which masculinist and patriarchal interpretations of religion directly and indirectly support forms of VAW.

Furthermore, Butler’s (2004) theory of normative violence includes the ways in which social practices impose the boundaries of being and produce ‘parameters of personhood’ because they “make persons according to abstract norms that at once condition and exceed the lives they can make and break” (Butler, 2004:56 in Boesten, 2014:5). These boundaries make certain lives ‘unlivable’, for example a gay person who is not allowed to live as gay, or women who divorce their husbands in societies where divorce is not socially or institutionally

accepted. Butler therefore highlights how life is made intelligible by others, because a person is understood when they are recognised by others, which means that people exist in a relational capacity. This means that normative frameworks help to form the relationality of life as well as parameters within which people's lives become intelligible and defined (Boesten, 2014:6).

We can relate normative violence to Brazil, where the cultural importance of the presence of the man in the home, regardless of IPV, and the inability for women to take communion in a Catholic church if they are divorced, are examples of cultural and Catholic norms which create suffering in the lives of women and impose boundaries of being, as well as manifesting forms of normative violence. Divorced women are seen as somehow 'less' because they do not have the presence of a husband in the home, which reduces their status in Church and in society in general where this norm is permeated. Therefore, some women would rather maintain a relationship with a violent man, rather than no relationship at all, because societal norms may make staying less violent than leaving.

This also links into the structural violence women face from the patriarchal organisation of State and society which makes women responsible for the family but tends to exacerbate their financial dependence on a male partner. In many cases women are concerned about their children growing up without their father around, as the symbolism of a male presence in the home is culturally very strong, linked to the historical Christian culture, which will be highlighted in Chapter 3.

This is supported in research, such as Menjívar (2011), who points to the structural and symbolic violence that the lack of equality within Catholic and conservative Protestant churches exacerbates. Menjívar (2011) conducted a study of the different forms of violence experienced by poor and low-income women in San Alejo, Guatemala. This is relevant to Brazil and the present research, because of the homogeneity of Latin American countries in terms of religious backgrounds (e.g. a predominant focus on Catholicism, as well as the growth of Pentecostalism in poor urban areas) and similar problems stemming from high levels of inequality and violence. Menjívar (2011) found that while women saw the Catholic Church and Pentecostal churches as spaces of solace and comfort, the churches' activities indirectly upheld gender inequalities. In the context of other social inequalities, this exacerbated the suffering in women's lives (196). For example, women were told to "pray, have faith, be patient, endure" (215). The insinuation was that if they did not do this, their problems were unlikely to be solved, putting the key to the problem onto women's wavering faith. The result was the normalisation of feelings of responsibility and culpability that the women felt about their situation as well as the normalisation of the suffering they were experiencing. According to Menjívar, religion (in this case Catholicism and Pentecostalism) offered women meaning, consolation, the possibility of meeting others in similar predicaments and therefore frameworks through which to understand their situation. However, Menjívar argues that there was no genuine transformation in their lives, because unequal structures related to gender role expectations were maintained, internalised and naturalised.

Although I do not intend to theorise structural, normative, and symbolic violence in this thesis, I include these theories here in order to help build up a picture of some of the indirect

forms of violence that women can experience within religious/faith-based contexts. I now turn to links between religion and more direct forms of VAW.

2.4.3 Catholicism, Conservative Protestantism and IPV

Some research has focused specifically on links between Catholicism, conservative Protestantism and IPV (e.g. Chong, 2008; Haaken et. al., 2007; Menjívar; 2011; Merry, 2001; Nason-Clark, 1997; Plesset, 2006; Souza & Lemos, 2009; Vilhena, 2011). For example, Souza & Lemos (2009) argue that the image of the “resigned, suffering and submissive woman in Catholicism” (8) became an important part of the socio-religious construction of the feminine in Brazil, and this has implications in cases of domestic violence. Feminine identity is seen as resigned to male authority and the idealization of the sacredness of marriage (Souza and Lemos, 2009).

The sacredness of marriage is echoed by Nancy Nason-Clark in one of the few books examining the role of religion in VAW and family violence, *The Battered Wife – How Christians Confront Family Violence* (1997). Studying Evangelical Protestants in Canada, Nason-Clark argues that women with strong religious belief are more likely to stay in an abusive relationship for longer and work harder at saving the marriage than secular women because they believe that a marriage vow made in front of God cannot be undone. According to Nason-Clark, the message that the family is sacred and that women are held to be the caretakers of the family, responsible for its well-being, can make women more likely to believe that the violence is God’s will or their own fault. In Evangelical Protestantism, especially Pentecostalism these beliefs are underscored in teachings about gender roles and marital

relationships where women may be encouraged to be strong but also silent, submissive and obedient to their husbands who are the head of the household.

Interestingly, based on early ethnographic research in Rio, Burdick (1990) suggested that women experiencing domestic violence would be more likely to seek help from Pentecostal Churches or Umbanda centres, because they were “cults of affliction” (153) where domestic conflict could be safely articulated and the blame placed onto spiritual “others” (ibid). In the case of Umbanda, this was the ‘evil eye’ or ‘the devil’ in the case of Pentecostalism, whereas Catholicism places the blame for wrongdoing on human agents (ibid).

However, Vilhena (2011) refutes this idea, finding in her research based in a CDCM offering help for abused women in the low-income, southern periphery of São Paulo, that high numbers of Pentecostal women were attending the centre seeking help for IPV. Vilhena argues that because conservative Protestant groups tend to interpret the Bible in a very literal manner, focusing strongly on the importance of the submission of women to their partners (at least in Brazil), it leaves women highly vulnerable to IPV. Therefore, women of faith from patriarchal and conservative, gender-traditional religions who experience IPV in their lives may struggle more than their ‘secular’ counterparts to deal with the violence, as their understanding of their gendered roles as mothers and subservient housewives makes it difficult to identify and act upon the situation of abuse in which they find themselves. Similarly, Kelly Chong (2008) finds that evangelical women in South Korea use religious involvement to help heal domestic distress but that this involvement also may reproduce this distress by reifying traditional gender roles. As a result, women experience confusion, contradiction, and anxiety.

2.4.4 Faith-based and 'Secular' Approaches to Domestic Violence

Arriving at the crux of this research and the body of literature to which this thesis contributes most directly, Bradley (2010) identified a largely negative view of religion in the literature on organisations combating domestic violence (e.g. Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Dobash and Dobash, 1998; French et al., 1998; Frías, 2013; Kapadia, 2003; Mathur, 2004, 2007; Merry, 2001), claiming that religion is presented as a mechanism through which VAW is supported and legitimised. So far, only a very small body of research has conducted studies within secular and Christian-based organisations offering help for victims of domestic violence (see e.g. Chong, 2008; Lewy and Dull, 2005; Haaken et al, 2007; Merry, 2001; Nason-Clark, 1997; 2009; Plesset, 2006; Vilhena, 2011) and very few have done any comparative work (for an exception see Plesset, 2006), highlighting the need for this research.

Nason-Clark (1997), for example, questions the role that personal faith and faith communities plays in the lives of battered women. Her analysis considers how churches and their leaders have responded, or failed to respond, to the needs of abuse victims and she questions the ways in which faith traditions and secular community resources work together or at least *could* work together, when addressing victims of abuse known to be of a particular faith. However, Nason-Clark (1997), and later Lewy and Dull (2005), found that religious women who experience domestic violence can have a particularly difficult time receiving adequate assistance because secular and religious professionals may give conflicting advice. The authors argue that many secular sources have little understanding of the importance of a victim's religious beliefs and may attribute the victim's abuse in part to her religion. In addition, they argue that religious victims often avoid secular resources and are reluctant to go to counselling because they are afraid their religious beliefs might be misunderstood. Lewy

and Dull (2005) find that mental health workers and shelter workers tend to report that the religious beliefs of their clients seem to reinforce passivity and are a deterrent to the effective confrontation of domestic violence and abuse.

Nason-Clark (1997) concluded that both religious and secular caregivers could work much more closely together. However, differences of opinion in critical matters such as the solubility or indissolubility of marriage, got in the way of closer secular/religious collaboration. Nason-Clark therefore suggested that educating priests and pastors about domestic violence could provide important assistance to reduce domestic violence. However, I believe this solution is complex considering the structural impediments to gender equality embedded in Catholic and Pentecostal teachings. As this study examines both how so-called 'secular' professionals and service users, as well as faith-based professionals and service users – who are themselves perhaps religious and or non-religious – negotiate religion in relation to concepts of gender and violence, the research conducted by Nason-Clark and Lewy and Dull (2005) is highly pertinent to my own and I will examine my findings in relation to the conclusions these researchers draw.

Futhermore, Plesset (2006) studied both a secular and a Catholic refuge centre for battered women in Parma, Northern Italy and compared the way in which local actors involved in the care of female victims of domestic violence interpreted gender relations. Plesset argues that they "use[d] the categories of tradition and modernity as rhetorical strategies to negotiate gender relations and gender change" (6). Plesset argues that just as modernity includes gendered processes, so understandings of gender are used by State and local actors to symbolise and make sense of modernity (2006:5). According to Plesset, VAW in Parma is

either blamed on old-fashioned and ‘traditional’ understandings of masculinity or on new and ‘modern’ forms of gender relations. In both cases, the focus is on societal understandings of gender which emphasises collective, rather than individual responsibility (5).

Plesset’s research is relevant here as I examine the ways in which gender is understood and the impact that gendered ideas have on understandings of violence in the centres. Plesset’s theory raises the issue of modernity and ‘modern’ forms of gender relations which different groups – i.e. State, secular and religious organisations – are keen to influence. However, I question the extent to which VAW is understood as collective, rather than individual responsibility. This links into divisive and hotly debated issue of contested notions of gender.

Women’s Identity and Subjectivity

The lack of research on the ways that faith is addressed in centres offering help for survivors of domestic violence demonstrates the need for the present research. This thesis therefore questions the role that religion plays in centres dealing with IPV, how faith impacts differing understandings of gender and therefore of violence, and how these different ideas of gendered roles and relations impact women’s sense of identity and subjectivity. In fact, as little research has drawn on the concept of women’s sense of identity and subjectivity, I draw on the research of Merry (2001), who examined the impact of different approaches of solutions to IPV on service users in Hawaii.

Merry (2001) compared an organization using a feminist analysis of patriarchy and an assertion of rights; a Pentecostal church’s focus on the elimination of negative spirits; and a national Hawaiian program with a focus on repentance and reconciliation within the

framework of family and community. Merry noted that despite differences, all three used similar technologies in the fashioning of self. These involved understanding of feelings, making choices and building self-esteem “thus promoting modern subjectivity in the midst of difference” (2001:39). According to Merry, in addition to these technologies of the self, modern subjectivity was created by criminalizing those who batter, which simultaneously served to confer more rights to the victims.

Merry’s analysis is useful in relation to Brazil, where a growing criminalisation of male violent behaviour towards women can also be said to have conferred more rights to women, allowing the growth of a rights-based discourse. In a country with high levels of VAW, changes in the law have allowed women to express a ‘right’ not to be hit and many men are learning that the historic minimisation of domestic violence, common until recently, is no longer acceptable. In the context of Brazil’s recent and burgeoning democracy and the creation of laws to protect them, Brazilian women’s subjectivity might also be produced through the creation and understanding of rights, and this will be examined more closely in Chapter 5. Moreover, Merry’s discussion of ‘technologies of the self’ clearly draws on Foucauldian theory examining the creation of the subject⁶, and I intend to use these concepts to theorise the ways in which battered women are subjectified within faith-based and secular centres addressing VAW. In particular, I will use Foucault’s theory of pastoral power (2007, [2004]

⁶ Foucault has written extensively on the creation of the subject (see e.g. 1991, [1975] *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; 1998 [1976] *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge* (Vol. 1); 1983 *The subject and Power*; 2003 [1963, 1973]) *The Birth of the Clinic*; 2007, [2004] [1977-1978]) *Security, Territory, Population, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*; 2014, [2011] [1970-1971]) *Lectures on the Will to Know: Lectures at the College de France 1970-1971 and Oedipal Knowledge*

[1977-1978]), although as I use this as a methodological device in order to analyse the relations of power and female subjectification within the centres, I examine the Foucauldian theory used in this thesis in the methodology Chapter 3.

2.5 Religion and Women's Agency

The focus on rights in Merry's (2001) research links in to research conducted by Haaken et al. (2007), who found the rights-based discourse to be of relevance, in particular the way it was used by religious organisations. The authors analysed key conflicts in the discourse on domestic violence between Evangelical Christian and feminist frameworks in the U.S. Although cautioning that not all Evangelical Christian discourses are the same, the authors demonstrate how faith-based discourse on domestic violence is being addressed by the integration of 'biblical feminism' and traditional interpretations of scripture. Haaken et al. (2007) argued that the field of female-led counselling for couples run by churches had emerged as a discursive space for women in which to articulate their grievances, and therefore placed women in the position of renegotiating the boundaries between spiritual and secular teachings. In order to not upset the patriarchal nature of church theology by placing women in leading roles, especially among groups of men, female counsellors made use of scripture which fortified patriarchal authority while at the same time expanding the domain of women's rights within the parameters of their religious community. For example, as a man who batters was judged to not be effecting his husbandly duties correctly, a wife was therefore within her rights to demand something be done about it. This demonstrates female agency within scripture and shows that while traditional, patriarchal gender patterns

are not changed, women of faith can find ways to address the violence they experience within the parameters of their religion.

So far, I have demonstrated that patriarchal, gender-traditional religions can create situations in which forms of GBV occur, even if these are unseen within the norms, structures and symbols of a country. However, this is not to say that women of faith in gender-traditional religions are not without agency, and it is important to focus on religious women's agency, because these women are actors in their own right, rather than simply acted upon by male-dominated social institutions (Burke, 2012). An important question which feminist scholars in the sociology of religion have raised is what exactly agency is and looks like. The feminist theorist Lois McNay defines agency as "the capacity for autonomous action in the face of often overwhelming cultural sanctions and structural inequalities" ((2000, in Burke, 2012: 123). This means that people demonstrate agency when they act in ways that are unexpected, despite the ways in which social institutions shape their actions, or regardless of internalised customs and traditions, as Bourdieu would suggest.

However, Burke goes beyond McNay's definition and identifies 4 approaches to the concept of agency in the case of women participating in gender-traditional religions. These are: 1) the resistance agency approach, influenced by the feminism, which sees women attempting to challenge or change some aspect of their religion, e.g. Catholic women who support women's right to abortion. As I am not examining women within their religious spheres but rather within ostensibly more 'secular' contexts and in relation to violence, the two conceptions of agency that are likely to be of most relevance in this thesis are: 2) the empowerment approach, which describes the ways in which women reinterpret religious doctrine or

practices in ways that allow them to feel empowered in their daily lives. Also, 3) the instrumental approach, which examines the non-religious, positive outcomes of religious practice. I will give examples of these in the next section examining women's conversion to Pentecostalism in Brazil.

Finally, 4) the compliant approach assesses agency within conformity to gender-traditional religions. For example, Saba Mahmood (2005) finds that pious Muslim women in Egypt submit to disciplinary practices which emphasise feminine modesty, humbleness and obedience. These practices might appear oppressive to Western feminist observers but because they allow the women to cultivate desirable Muslim piety, Mahmood argues that these women find agency in submission. Mahmood is therefore critical of the Western, feminist concept of liberal selfhood which assumes that personal agency lies in resisting constraints to autonomy in processes of self-realisation. It is not my aim in this thesis to add to these definitions; nevertheless, the concept of religious women's agency is an important one to take into account when analysing the ways in which religion is negotiated in the domestic violence centres under study.

2.5.1 Religion and Women's Agency in Brazil

Brazil is a country where the presence of faith – particularly Christian faiths are strong. In fact, one of Brazil's most iconic symbols is the enormous statue of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, gazing down over Rio de Janeiro. Almost 90 per cent of the Brazilian population agrees that religion is very important in their lives and around 50 per cent of Brazilians regularly attend some form of worship (Souza & Lamounier, 2010). Catholicism held a religious monopoly in Brazil since its colonisation until well into the twentieth century (Medcalf, 1987). However,

Catholicism dropped to around 68 per cent in 2009, with people migrating in particular to Evangelical Protestant faiths (22 per cent), most of which are Pentecostal⁷. There are also small percentages of adherents to the African spiritist *Candomblé* and *Umbanda* religions, as well as Kardecists and Spiritualists (Souza & Lamounier, 2010). Brazil can now claim to be one of the world's largest Catholic and Pentecostal nations simultaneously. Even if the number of those who profess to be non-religious has grown in the last thirty years, they are a very small group e.g. self-identified atheists form less than 10 per cent of the population (Neri, 2012), and even those who do not practice their religion regularly admit to relying on faith and religion in situations of emotional stress (Souza and Lamounier, 2010).

Conversion to Pentecostalism

Research on gendered aspects of conversion to Pentecostalism in Latin America highlights women's agency and Burke's (2012) concepts of empowerment through religion as well as the instrumentalisation of religion for non-religious outcomes. For example, the growth in Evangelical Protestantism has occurred on a similar timeline with the growth in violence across the country, and has been fuelled largely by the conversion of the working class, in particular, low-income women from urban suburbs which experience high levels of crime and violence. This could be because Pentecostal conversion is sometimes viewed as a strategy for

⁷ Evangelical Protestant and Pentecostal doctrines are very similar, although Pentecostals place stronger emphasis on gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, miracles and divine healing. Therefore all Pentecostals are Evangelical, although not all Evangelicals are Pentecostal (Pew Forum, 2006). However, in Brazil all non-Catholics are known as and refer to themselves as *Evangélicos* (Evangelicals) although Pentecostals form the largest and fastest growing group of Protestants. In this study Pentecostals were interviewed, but referred to themselves as Evangelicals, therefore for the purposes of this study the terms Pentecostal and Evangelical are taken to mean the same, the doctrinal differences being very small.

dealing with poverty (Stoll, 1990), as it is a short-term, problem-solving religion which offers practical solutions to survival, giving converts a sense of empowerment (Rostas and Droogers, 1993) and a new form of social organization that increases physical and economic security (Stoll, 1990).

Moreover, some of the research exploring Evangelical Protestant conversion has examined links to violence and gender relations (Birman, 2007; Brusco, 1995; Burdick, 1996; Goldstein, 2003; Mariz and Machado, 1997; Vilhena, 2011). Goldstein suggested from her feminist ethnography in a Rio favela that “women are choosing religious conversion as a gendered form of oppositional culture, namely, gang membership and participation in urban violence” (2003: 217). She described female conversion as a “flight into a religious world that prohibits drinking, advocates moral redemption, and still believes in honest work” (2003: 219), and supported her argument by suggesting that conversion to Pentecostalism sent a visual message to the rest of the world that the women were not part of the violence surrounding them, which demonstrates that conversion is linked to physical and economic survival. In this instance, Goldstein clearly prioritised the conversion of women to Pentecostalism as an answer to violence occurring in public space.

Furthermore, Brusco’s (1995) feminist ethnography of female converts to Pentecostalism in Colombia suggested that women’s Evangelical conversion was a “strategic woman’s movement, like Western feminism, because it serves to reform gender roles in a way that enhances female status” (1995: 6). This was due to the asceticism demanded by Pentecostalism whereby activities such as drinking, smoking, gambling and extramarital sexual relations were forbidden. Male conversion therefore entailed the domestication of

men, because it brought the male focus back towards the devalued sphere of the home, elevating domesticity and responsibility (Brusco, 1995). Mariz and Machado (1997) supported Brusco's theory, pointing to the support network that Pentecostalism created for women, the strong family focus linked to women's immediate needs and the emotional independence women sometimes gained from their families through evangelizing. Therefore, Mariz and Machado pointed out that the transformation would be most noteworthy for lower-class women, as the "domestication of men occurs concomitantly with women's increased participation in the public sphere" (1997: 42).

A similar finding was echoed by Birman (2007), who found that the conversion allowed women from impoverished areas a voice in a public sphere they hadn't had before. This was due to the 'priesthood of all believers' and because converts evangelised in the names of God and Jesus, legitimising their message within the public sphere. According to Drogus (1997), the Pentecostal Church did not set out to undermine dominant gender patterns, but the strong family focus reoriented the man towards the feminine goals of family life, therefore encouraging more equality within the marriage. The fact that both men and women could evangelise and both men and women could display 'sign gifts' such as speaking in tongues or having prophetic visions, created more equality between the sexes (Drogus, 1997).

The research presented here clearly demonstrates that conversion allowed the women to feel empowered and they achieved important, non-religious outcomes from their conversion, for example confidence and independence. This thesis does not focus on conversion, but these theories help to explain why the urban poor in Brazil – especially women – who live with high levels of violence, might be attracted to Pentecostalism. However, it is important to point out

that many of these changes are said to occur *when the husband also converts* to Pentecostalism, meaning that women whose male partners do not convert, could continue to remain more vulnerable in cases of IPV. Overall, in the context of this thesis, acknowledging women's agency is important when examining how religion is negotiated in both faith-based and 'secular' institutions.

It is equally important to acknowledge the complexities of individual's religious practices, experiences and expressions, which are not evident through religious affiliation or organisation participation (McGuire, 2008). McGuire argues for the concept of 'lived religion' – that is, examining faith through the ways in which religion and spirituality are practiced, experienced, and expressed by people, rather than official doctrine, as scholars of religion have demonstrated that these are not the same. This is a useful way to conceptualise faith and religious practice, and for this reason, in this thesis, conversations with women of faith in which they discuss their religion will highlight some of the ways in which they understand, practice and perceive their faith. Furthermore, Grace Davie's concept of 'believing without belonging' (1990) refers to people who have some kind of faith or spirituality but who do not belong to a specific church or attend some kind of religious service. As some of the women I interview have some kind of faith but do not attend church, Davies' concept is useful in this context.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature across the scholarly debates upon which this study is based. Burgeoning literature on the role of FBOs and secular organisations in the public

sphere is clearly important in relation to gender and the rights of women, particularly in the case of victims of violence. VAW is ubiquitous the world over, however, it also has local, geographical and social implications. I have demonstrated here the importance of patriarchy as a useful prism for understanding different forms of VAW, which include both 'visible' and 'unseen' forms of violence. Brazil presents a particularly important country in which to study the complicated nexus between religion, gender and violence, as it is a country with high levels of interpersonal violence which occur in both public and private spheres. In addition, feminist and religious activism, particularly in the form of Catholicism and more recently Pentecostalism, suggest that these intersections need to be seriously examined. Not only are women subject to physical and psychological forms of violence, but violence has been demonstrated to be engrained in patriarchal states and institutions, through symbolic, structural and normative violence which exacerbate and normalise gender inequality.

The next Chapter (3) will contextualise Brazil's specific characteristics, which includes a history of the patriarchal state and Catholic and Pentecostal involvement in the creation of the cultural, religious and legal norms in the country, from colonisation to the present day. The feminist movement in Brazil has been of great importance in relation to advancing women's rights and policies addressing VAW, although many of their efforts are also stymied by the religious/secular controversy over gender in public debate. This will be examined in-depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: PATRIARCHAL INSTITUTIONS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND THE 'GENDER' POLEMIC IN BRAZIL

It is my argument (...) that women's activism cannot be analysed without contextualising it in the wider political culture in which it takes place (Nadje Al-Ali, 2000:2).

3.1 Introduction

In order to understand where modern Brazilian women find themselves today, it is important to understand women's history in the formation of the Brazilian nation, by looking at their experiences with the patriarchal institutions and practices that have influenced their lives. While the last chapter looked at the academic literature across the field of study within which this thesis is situated, this chapter looks specifically at Brazil, in order to contextualise the study. This chapter aims to provide the political, cultural, historical, legal and religious contexts which have shaped Brazilian women's lives from colonialism until the present day.

First of all, in keeping with the theme of VAW of this thesis, in Section 3.2 I provide statistics highlighting the high levels of physical VAW in Brazil. In section 3.3. I point to the different forms of formal help available for abused women and the legal changes that have occurred in the twenty-first century in response to rising levels of violence. I turn to an examination of patriarchal institutions in Section 3.4, such as the State and religious institutions including the

Catholic Church and the growth of conservative Evangelical Protestant Churches, which have been strong shapers of gender roles and relations, from colonisation to the present day. I demonstrate how Liberalism led to change but also maintained patriarchal control over women, although the growth of social, faith-based and feminist movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries improved women's rights, creating an important social fabric within a burgeoning democracy. I will show how changing Church-State relations under military government as well as the advent of Catholic Liberation Theology had contradictory effects on female emancipation. This analysis helps to highlight that forms of GBV and VAW continues through the symbolic, structural and normative violence found within patriarchal State institutions, the government, the legal system and even religious organisations. These organisations affect Brazilian women's rights, for example women's lack of access to safe and legal abortion, and I underscore the intense, current debate over definitions of 'gender' which polarises the country. Section 3.5 provides concluding remarks.

3.2 Physical Violence Against Women in Brazil

Statistics suggest that Brazil has very high levels of VAW, although due to problems including a lack of reporting for IPV and discrepancies in the way forms of VAW are recorded by local authorities, the data are likely to reveal far lower levels of VAW than actually exist (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017). For example, a government report found that 1 in 5 women were victims of IPV (Secretaria de Transparência & DataSenado, 2013), although this is likely to be too low considering a WHO report which found that IPV affects at least 1 in 3 women around the world (RHR & WHO, 2013).

Brazil's data collection agency – *Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada* (IPEA) admit that statistics on sexual violence are also hard to gain due to different ways of reporting crimes across the country and the taboo around the issue. The Brazilian Forum for Public Security (*Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* – FBSP) announced that 47,643 rapes were reported to the police in 2014, which represents 1 rape every 11 minutes (Cerqueira, Coelho & Ferreira, 2017). IPEA believe that as little as 10 per cent of rape cases are actually reported to the police, due to fear of reprisal and humiliation, meaning that statistics could be considerably higher (Cerqueira & Coelho, 2014). The large majority of victims are female (88.5 per cent) and more than half are under the age of 13 (ibid). Fifteen per cent of all rapes involve more than one aggressor and this form of gang rape is most common among adolescents. The aggressors are male 98 per cent of the time and known to their victims in 70 per cent of cases, either as parents, partners or friends, although the likelihood of rape by a stranger increases among adults (ibid).

Lethal violence against women has also risen dramatically since democratisation in the 1980s. According to the Sangari Institute which measures different forms and levels of violence in Brazil, femicide – the killing of women based on their sex⁸ – has tripled since the 1980s (Waiselfisz, 2012b). In 1980, 1,353 or 2.3 women per 100,000 were killed, but by 2009 this figure had reached 4,260 or 4.4 women per 100,000, an increase of 91 per cent. From 1980 to 2010, around 91,000 women were killed in Brazil and half of the women - 45,500 - were

⁸ In Brazil, femicide is defined as the killing of women based on sex and not based on gender. The law addressing femicide (13.104/2015) was only passed when the word 'gender' was taken out, as Catholic and Evangelical Protestant political groups refused to support the law otherwise. Brazil has the highest level of transgender killings in the world (TGEU, 2016), but these are not included in statistics of femicide.

killed between 2000-2010, suggesting that the killing of women has increased since the turn of the century (Waiselfisz, 2012b). Research by the IPEA puts the figure slightly higher at around 50,000 deaths per 100,000 women between 2001 and 2011⁹. The results are statistics of an estimated 5.82 deaths per 100,000 women, the equivalent of 5,664 deaths per year, or 472 per month, meaning an average of 15.52 deaths per day or *the wilful killing of one female every hour and a half across the country* (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013).

The number of femicides is shockingly high. Among 83 countries with similar characteristics, Brazil currently ranks fifth in the world for lethal violence against women (Nações Unidas, 2016; Waiselfisz, 2015). Estimates range between 4.8 femicides per 100,000 women (Waiselfisz, 2015) to 5.82 per 100,000 (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013). According to Waiselfisz (2015), only El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala and Russia have higher statistics of female homicides, also demonstrating that four out of the top five most lethal countries in the world for women are in Latin America.

In Brazil, more than half of all female victims are shot and around 34 per cent are killed with some form of sharp or blunt piercing instrument, such as a knife, and a further 6 per cent die by suffocation or strangulation (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013; Waiselfisz, 2012b). This is compared to 75 per cent of men who are shot, 20 per cent of whom are killed with a piercing instrument and only 1 per cent of whom are killed through

⁹ IPEA's figures allow for discrepancies in Brazil's Ministry of Health Mortality Information System (SIM) (*Sistema de Informações de Mortalidade*), on which both institutes base their findings (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013). However, the IPEA study takes into account 7 per cent of deaths in the SIM that are unaccounted for and readjusts the average (ibid).

suffocation or strangulation. The home is the place where women are most likely to be killed (in 40 per cent of cases) compared to 15 per cent for men (Waiselfisz, 2012b). Approximately 36 per cent of violent female deaths occur at the weekend with around 20 per cent of deaths occurring on a Sunday, which further supports the contention that women suffer predominantly at the hands of family members, as Sunday is traditionally the 'day of rest' when families spend most time together. It should also be noted that women's roles as perpetrators of violence in Brazil are very under-researched (for an exception see Abramovay et al., 2010).

Although violence is known to affect all women across all levels of Brazilian society, regardless of race, age, status and education, in Brazil lethal violence against women tends to happen more frequently to women of child-bearing age, with low levels of schooling, and predominantly of black or mixed race. More than half of the women murdered are aged between 20 and 39, while 23 per cent are aged 30 to 39 (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013). A high 61 per cent of all victims are of black or mixed race, reaching 87 per cent of women in the Northeast, 83 per cent in the North, 68 per cent in the Centre/West, and black women form the highest number of victims in every region except in the South¹⁰ (ibid). These locations are also the regions with the highest numbers of female killings overall, as the Northeast, Centre/West and North have above average female murder rates of 6.90, 6.86 and 6.40 per 100,000 women respectively (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013). This is compared to São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul,

¹⁰ Surprisingly, the report did not make clear the fact that the North and Northeast are areas with the highest concentrations of African descendants due to Brazil's slave history, while the South received a far higher proportion of European immigrants.

where femicide rates are among the lowest in the country, with 2.9 per cent, 3.1 per cent, and 3.8 per cent respectively. Disproportionately high levels of violence occurring in public spaces and male homicides also occur in the North-eastern states of Espírito Santo and Bahia, which are the areas with the highest levels of femicide rates and other forms of VAW. These same statistics are proportionately lower in the Southern regions, where figures for VAW are also lower. The figures on the following two pages highlight these statistics.

Kim Beecheno



Figure 1 Map of Brazilian States

Source: Geographic Guide Website
(<http://mapas.geographicguide.net/brasil.htm>)

Figure 1 Names of Brazilian States

Figure 2 Shows the number of female homicides per State. Red areas are the most violent with more than 6.5 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, orange

demonstrates between 5.5 and 6.5 deaths, yellow between 4.51 to 5.5 and green is the lowest with 4.5 deaths per 100,000 or less. Bahia and Espírito Santo are areas with high levels of violence against women, (mainly in the North, Northeast and Centre West as discussed above) while Santa Catarina, São Paulo and Piauí are in green with the lowest numbers. The lowest numbers of femicides are mostly in the South, except for Piauí, Maranhão and Ceará in the North/Northeast.

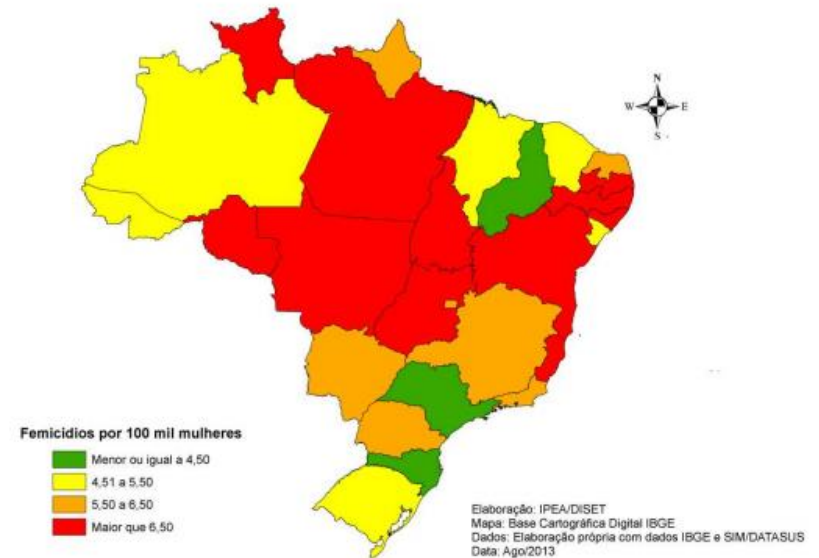


Figure 2 Femicides per 100,000 women according to Brazilian State, 2009-2011

Source: Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013

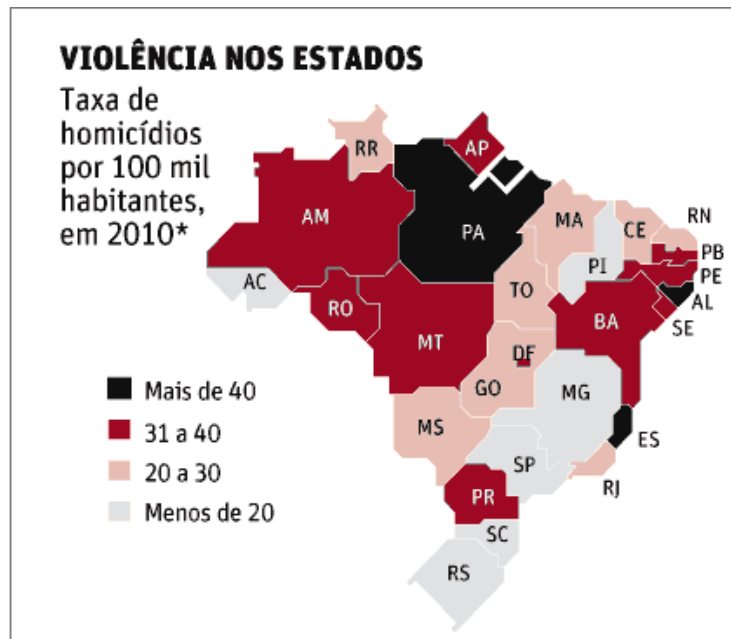


Figure 3 Homicide Rates in Brazilian States per 100,000 deaths, 2010

Source: Drug War 101 Website
(<http://www.drugwar101.com/blog/archives/3498>)

Figure 3 Figure 3 shows homicides per 100,000 of population by State: grey = <20, pink = 20-30, red = 31-40 and black = >40.

Figure 4 shows the overall death rates in the States of Brazil per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010. This figure includes deaths other than homicides such as traffic accidents, but the statistics still show that the States with the highest number of deaths are those of Alagoas, Espírito Santo, Pará, and Bahia. These are also the places with some of the highest levels of femicides. In addition, Santa Catarina, São Paulo and Piauí, the States with the lowest levels of femicides, are among the States with the lowest levels of overall deaths.

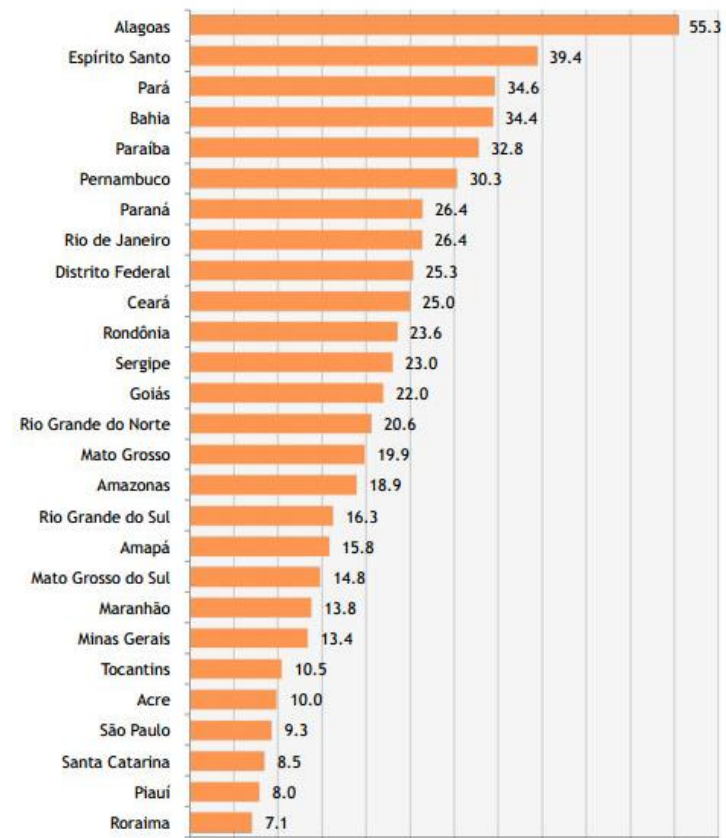


Figure 4 Death Rates in Brazilian States per 100, 000 deaths, 2010

Source: Waiselfisz, 2013 Mapa da Violência

There is no clear answer as to why the femicide rate has increased, although many researchers point to the general rise in violence in urban areas which has become ubiquitous (Torres-Rivas, 1999), 'everyday' (Scheper-Hughes) and a 'common' or 'endemic' feature that permeates daily life, especially in low-income areas (Koonings, 1999). Researchers find that those who live in suburban areas experience a complex layer of multiple forms of violence, and that its associated fear and insecurity has been 'routinised' and 'normalised' into the realities of everyday life (Pecault, 1999; Moser & McIlwaine, 2006). This includes theft, mugging, burglary, crimes associated with alcohol and drug misuse, gang violence and prostitution, as well as intra-family abuse (Moser & McIlwaine, 2006).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) says that Brazil is experiencing a severe violence epidemic, a status it confers on countries suffering from at least ten homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (UNDC, 2011). In Brazil, the homicide count has averaged around 22 per 100,000 inhabitants since 2000 (ibid). This means that over a thirty-year period from 1980 to 2010, there were more than a million homicides in Brazil, which is an average of around 36,000 deaths a year (Waiselfisz, 2012a). While this might be understandable for a country at war, in Brazil the violence has occurred during a time of peace and has risen significantly since the relatively stable and controlled return to democracy in 1985 (Krujit, 2001). It is important to note that there are also wide variations in levels of lethal violence occurring in cities. While overall murder rates in São Paulo have been decreasing, giving the state one of the lowest murder rates in the country (see Figure 4), the homicide rates vary dramatically, with some low-income suburban areas reaching levels of over 100 homicides per 100,000, as is the case in the Eastern and Southern suburban peripheral areas of São Paulo where I conducted my research (SEADE, 2016).

3.3 Formal Strategies for Addressing VAW

Women's Police Departments (WPDs)

A strong women's movement and criticism of the way regular police stations and male police responded to denunciations of violence against women led to Brazil being among the first countries in the world to introduce Women's Police Departments (WPDs) in 1985, staffed entirely by women (Hautzinger, 2007; UN, 2005). Studies have revealed that complaints are mainly related to physical injuries and threats to women, committed by their partners, former partners or family members in up to 70 per cent of the cases (UN, 2005). As of 2014, across Brazil's 5,500 municipalities, there are only 500 WPDs, 160 specialised nucleuses for domestic violence within regular police stations, and only 220 specialised day centres which offer social welfare assistance, psychological support and legal advice (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017), such as the ones examined in this study. The majority of these are in the south and southeast of the country, in wealthier regions, which according to Figure 2 above are in areas where VAW is less prevalent. As funding for these centres is influenced by local, state budgets rather than national budgets, it would appear that poorer states have not prioritised the issue of VAW. There are only 77 full-time housing shelters¹¹. In the judicial sphere, there are now 92 courts that are specialised in domestic violence, 59 specialised nuclei within the public defender's office and 9 specialised nuclei within the Public Prosecutor's office, however, this is low compared to how many of such specialised courts are needed across the country (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017).

¹¹ The specialized day centres do not house women.

Hautzinger (2007) argues that while the WPDs call male violence into question, this simultaneous questioning also serves to increase VAW. At the same time, lack of training for officers in nuances of gender relations means that the emphasis is mainly on reconciliation and assaults are often “undercriminalised” (Hautzinger, 2007: 196). Or, the opposite, “hypercriminalisation” often occurs, where police responses are overly forceful. Hautzinger argues that making the WPDs specific to women and staffed by women characterised domestic violence as a woman’s problem. There is also the assumption that a policewoman would identify with a woman through female solidarity and that the ‘female’ element in her identity would take precedence over the ‘police’ element. Finally, it seems that public perception of the WPDs is that they would provide services such as counselling and legal advice, whereas in reality the only option the WPDs offer is punitive police responses. Hautzinger (2007) argues that the feminisation of the police in the WPDs with its suggested maternal overtones is important for creating a view of the police as agents of a legitimate and representative State, rather than as agents of a State warring against its civilian population. However, this separation of ‘female’ issues from ‘male’ issues has led to a vision within the police force that working for the WPDs is somehow less important than the ‘real’ work being conducted by police officers in regular police stations, and therefore many female police officers resent being sent to work in a WPD.

For many Brazilian women there is a reluctance to go to the police as women are looking for solutions that don’t lead to formal complaints being made (Instituto Patricia Galvão & Data Popular, 2013). Some women do not want to be in legal conflict with their aggressor or take any action that will put them in prison, often because they fear the consequences or depend on the aggressor financially (Instituto Patricia Galvão & Data Popular, 2013). According to the

survey which revealed this information, many women are embarrassed about IPV, some women believe there will not be punishment for the men, some believe it will be the last time, and a small percentage don't know their rights (ibid).

Brazil also set up the *Central de Atendimento a Mulher*, a woman's helpline (dial 180), which according to 2013 statistics had received 2.7 million calls since its creation in 2006 (DataSenado, 2013), suggesting that millions of women across Brazil are seeking help and advice due to violence. Overall, the belief is that attitudes towards the silence around domestic violence is changing, with more people feeling that the aggressor should be denounced, and that it is not simply a private matter between partners (ibid). Although people believe that punishment for perpetrators has increased, 50 per cent of respondents felt that the Brazilian justice system did not help reduce violence against women (compared to only 38 per cent who felt it did), and an extremely high 85 per cent felt that the Brazilian justice system did not satisfactorily punish men who kill their wives (ibid). In general, it was felt that the justice system was too slow and the punishment given was too light. Despite these feelings, however, the police remain the first port of call (ibid).

Legal Change

Macaulay (2005) argues that domestic violence cases have been increasingly 'judicialised' across the Latin American region due to the hemisphere-wide growth in informal and transactional forms of justice. These were promoted by both national reformers and international bodies such as the World Bank, intended to expand access to justice for the general population. Due to its common colonial and post-colonial histories, Latin America has relatively high homogeneity in its legal systems, and in 1994 it was the first region to appoint

a Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights and to draft and approve its own domestic violence norms, after the Organization of American States' Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the *Belém do Pará* Convention. Macaulay (2005) suggests that in many ways the laws passed in the region are quite progressive in relation to measures and exclusions the courts can apply, the detailing of responsibilities of the police, courts and social services, as well as protection for victims and criminal sanctions against offenders. Furthermore, Macaulay argues that the definitions of domestic violence are generally very complete, encompassing not only physical assault, but also psychological, emotional, financial and sexual abuse, including, in some cases, rape in marriage. Yet Macaulay also finds that a process of 'hybridised' judicialisation has been highly problematic, because complaints have shifted to the courtroom as domestic violence is not part of the Penal Code, and is instead considered to be a primarily civil offence. According to Macaulay, this has effectively de-criminalised and downgraded domestic violence, despite the apparently more precise operational definitions of domestic violence detailed in law (Macaulay, 2005).

Brazil has taken the lead to address this problem. In September 2006, the Brazilian Congress passed the historic 'Maria da Penha' law – *Lei Maria da Penha*¹² (n11.340) – making domestic violence a crime for the first time and giving protection to victims of any sex, including same-sex couples (Amnesty, 2008). Whereas hearings for domestic violence had previously taken place in small claims courts often resulting in the payment of a fine, perpetrators now face

¹² Named after the woman who was shot, electrocuted and rendered paraplegic by her university professor husband. It took the courts nine years (in which he was free) to sentence him to eight years for his crimes, of which he only served two years before being released (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017).

arrest and imprisonment for up to three years (Amnesty, 2008). Sadly, however, research suggests that the Maria da Penha Law has had virtually no impact on the reduction of violent female deaths (Garcia, Freitas, Marques da Silva & Höfelmann, 2013). A comparison of statistics for periods before and after the creation of the law shows minimal decreases: from 2001 to 2006 just before the law came into effect, the average was 5.28 femicides per 100,000 women (ibid). From 2007 to 2011, the average fell only marginally to 5.22 femicides per 100,000 women. The initial drop noticed shortly after the introduction of the law was rapidly reversed as the statistics climbed again in 2008 (ibid). While seen as a victory by feminist organisations because it toughened up penalties, the law has been criticised for relying too heavily on criminalisation and not developing alternative, preventative programming for less extreme cases (Hautzinger, 2007; Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017). This suggests that the law has not been an effective deterrent to men, who continue to practice GBV and even kill their wives with apparently relative impunity. This further suggests the continued forms of symbolic, structural and normative violence related to gender domination exist both in society and within patriarchal institutions tasked with solving the problems of VAW, meaning that real change is not occurring, despite visible moves to address male violence.

More recently, in 2015, a law was created which specifically labelled femicide – the killing of women based on their gender – a heinous crime (*Lei do Feminicídio*, nº13.104). This law takes into account factors such as the woman's age (especially if below 14 or above 60), whether she is pregnant or has recently had a baby, whether family members are involved and the state of the woman's health particularly in relation to mental or physical deficiencies. If the circumstances point to femicide, the penalty will be increased by a third or up to half (Nações Unidas, 2016). However, in Brazil, femicide as defined as the killing of a woman based on her

sex, and not based on gender, as Catholic and Pentecostal lobbies would not allow the law to pass unless wording was changed. I noted in the previous chapter (2) that Brazil has the highest rate of transgender murders in the world, and yet the femicide law does not include men who have come to identify as women. The murder of transgender men and women is clearly related to issues around gender and points to Butler's concept of normative violence, whereby physical violence is to an extent 'accepted' when people do not conform to certain societal norms. Unwittingly, some conservative Christian views on gender and sexuality are supporting normative violence which leads to physical violence against the transgender community. Furthermore, this is a clear instance of the influence of Catholic and conservative Protestant organisations in politics, which influences the lives of all Brazilians – whether they are followers of these faiths or not – and demonstrates the strength of religious groups in the public sphere. In the next section, I turn to an historical overview of the patriarchal institutions which have influenced women's lives and women's rights in Brazil.

3.4 Patriarchal Institutions and VAW in Brazil

3.4.1 Colonial Arrangements of Gender and Sexuality

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Hunnicutt's (2009) revision of the term patriarchy is a useful concept in relation to VAW because it exposes the structural and ideological (as well as systematic) subordination of women by men. Importantly, Hunnicutt identifies how patriarchal systems are based on hierarchical domination and the ways in which these intersect with hierarchical divisions such as race and class. For example, in colonial Brazil, society was shaped by the Portuguese Imperial Government and Luso-Catholic ecclesiastical institutions. The Roman Catholic Church was the dominant cultural institution of the

Portuguese empire, creating a framework within which men and women were given certain social and gendered expectations of their role in society. This varied not just according to gender, but also according to race, ethnicity and class. Indigenous communities were exploited and Africans were brought to the country as slaves. The legitimacy of the State was based on the belief that the State's power derived from God, although as Dore (2000) points out, State power ultimately derives from the State's capacity to impose its rule with violence. The patriarchal system was designed by senior males who exercised authority in the home, the community and in the polity (ibid).

The Catholic Church and State helped to inculcate norms for clothing, comportment and activities that limited women's bodies, and models of honour formulated in Medieval Europe were transferred to the colony. A woman's virtue and morality were therefore developed by the gender-specific teachings that the Catholic Church provided. For the first 200 years of colonialism, women had little access to education which was run by the Catholic Church in accordance to Portuguese Catholic standards of feminine behaviour (Marcílio, 1993). According to Marcílio, the Church focused on nominal instruction in religious doctrines as well as training in domestic and social skills. The Virgin Mary and other female saints were cultivated as the appropriate inspiration for women's identity, while female submission and silence were praised as important female attributes (Marcílio, 1993). Essentially barred from public life and public office, honour for elite women was gained through seclusion, chastity and later marriage and motherhood, while elite men claimed honour through public rank, family lineage and personal conduct (Myscofski, 2013).

Christian-based cultural myths around concepts of male and female sexuality, virginity and an honour/shame dyad also had gendered and racial implications (Myscofski, 2013). According to Myscofski, women's honour rested on their sense of 'shame': women were expected to hide their heads and bodies from public view and their behaviour from public scrutiny. A woman who failed to cover up or behave correctly violated her honour and therefore revealed her social and sexual immorality based on her shamelessness. Indigenous and enslaved African women were considered dishonoured because of their failure to adopt European dress; this dishonour also confirmed their shamelessness and made them vulnerable to seduction and sexual attacks and abuse. Onto black and *mulata*¹³ women were projected sexual availability and promiscuity, which served to satiate the sexual desires and fantasies of the white, elite males, whose sexual transgressions were regularly overlooked by the Catholic Church, in institutionalised double-standards (Myscofski, 2013).

Stoler (2010, [2002]) points out that the epistemology of race in colonial countries was a constantly changing criterion as colonial agents were aware that changes had potent political effects that could either limit or expand State responsibilities and social reform, by determining who was or was not excluded. These "blurred genres" of rule were not necessarily signs of States in distress, but part of "degrees of sovereignty" and "gradations of rights" which were key features of "imperial formations" (Stoler, 2010: ix). Colonial architects would either discard contextual differences as irrelevant or elevate them as crucial, depending on how it suited their requirements. However, these changing categorisations formed the 'conditions of possibility' for the people subject to them (ibid). Men and women's

¹³ The term 'mulata' means a mixed-race woman and is controversial due to its historical context (Myscofski, 2013).

conditions of possibility were therefore linked to their race, ethnicity, age and social class. Religious moral teachings about gender and sexuality created and maintained stereotypes, creating structural and normative violence imposed through unequal rules and norms via the Church and colonial agents. In order to control women's sexuality, VAW was normalised, linked to hierarchies of race and social class (Boesten, 2014).

The Catholic Church defended matrimony, partly to limit abduction and under-age marriages, ostensibly protecting some women and girls, but also giving the Church increased authority over women, who could be married against their will or to perpetrators of violence (Myscowski, 2013). Marriage possibilities for impoverished and marginalised indigenous or African women were severely limited. Since childrearing was deemed to be women's responsibility, unmarried and abandoned women were also single parents and heads of households: in São Paulo's 1789 census, 46 per cent of households were headed by women (ibid). Thus, Brazil has a long history of female-headed households which do not conform to the 2-parent 'nuclear family' so revered within Catholicism and conservative Protestantism. According to Myscowski (2013), the patriarchal, religious discourse expressed in the colony tried to create a single ideal for women, on the basis that a good Christian woman would maintain her own and her family's honour by guarding her virginity, marrying well and removing herself from the public by focusing on the domestic sphere. But other poor, black, mixed-race, indigenous and enslaved women could not remain virgins, marry or withdraw from the public sphere. The slave culture made this ideal unobtainable for some women, who were then punished for not living up to its standards.

In addition, across the Latin American region, Spanish and Portuguese legal systems justified male violence, such that men could beat and even kill their wives with impunity, especially when male 'honour' was at stake (Uribe-Uran, 2013). In colonial times, a man was legally allowed to kill both his adulterous wife and her lover, should they be caught together (Besse, 1989). A husband could justify his violent actions by citing his wife's disobedience or insolence, and her infidelity or attacks against his honour, which would be considered extenuating circumstances under the law (ibid). In Brazil, this patriarchal authority legalising VAW continued into the twentieth century: it was only in 1940 that 'crimes of passion' were no longer accepted as a legal defence in courts of law, after campaigning by middle-class women and later men (Besse, 1989). And it was only in 1980 that 'legitimate defence of honour' was finally legally excluded as courtroom defence for wife killing in Brazilian courts (Cerqueira & Coelho, 2014).

3.4.2 Liberalism, Patriarchy and Women's Rights

Liberalism and independence¹⁴ in the nineteenth century brought legal reform and certain levels of secularisation which decreased the Catholic Church's power and increased State power, although both Molyneux (2000) and Dore (2000) argue that the generally accepted view that these changes brought steady 'progress' and expanded women's rights is wrong. Although the authors accept that legal reforms and some aspects of secularisation did reduce gender inequalities for women, Dore argues that the general direction of change was "regressive rather than progressive" (2000:5). This is because while States were keen to modernise patriarchal rule, they did not want to abolish it. Therefore, the adoption of the

¹⁴ Brazil declared its independence from Portugal and became the Empire of Brazil in 1822.

Napoleonic Code in Latin American post-colonial States maintained patriarchal authority in both the domestic and public spheres, “until challenged by the combined assaults of modernity and the mobilisation of women within protest movements from the later nineteenth century onwards” (Molyneux, 2000:39).

Although women were increasingly visible in public life as workers, traders, shop assistants and professionals, the Napoleonic code meant that women still had no rights in the family. Women were legally obliged to hand over any earnings to their husband, they had no automatic rights to marital property, they could not testify in court or hold public office, and they had no legal authority or claim to their children under *patria potestad* (parental authority) (ibid). According to Molyneux, women were considered “outside citizenship” (2000:43), because they were perceived to lack rationality and be too weak and impulsive to be equal to men. As full female suffrage was only granted after the outbreak of World War II, more than a century after Independence, political citizenship could only be claimed by some men (and even then, in most Latin American States, this meant only men who were literate, who had property or had done national service).

Ideas surrounding gender difference were strongly rooted in Catholicism, which attached symbolic meanings to maternalist constructions of femininity and supported the idea of separate spheres for men and women (Molyneux, 2000). Across the region, early feminists therefore used these ideas of domestic and maternal virtues as their basis for activism and in order to create female ties of solidarity. They challenged the unequal laws and the terms of their social and political exclusion in ways that acknowledged the special significance of their role in the family through a form of ‘civic maternalism’ in their bid for citizenship (ibid). This

theme was used by both feminists and States during the twentieth century, although for different ends.

State, Legal and Social change

Brazil experienced a military coup in 1889 which established the first Brazilian Republic. The country also experienced dictatorship during the Vargas Era (1930-1934 and 1937-1945) and military dictatorship (1964-1985) (Marcílio, 1993), which had contradictory effects on gender relations and women's positions in society. The military regime was keen to restructure State and society in a bid for modernisation (Htun, 2003). This included industrial development, a reorganisation of the political system into a 2-party system and suppression of labour movements and of the communist party. These economic policies pushed vast numbers of women into the workforce, inadvertently serving to break down public/private distinctions and allowing for challenges to traditional gender roles (ibid). Women's rapidly changing place in society – linked to the presence of female workers who also participated in strikes and demonstrations demanding better pay and conditions, as well as the growth of women who engaged in commercial sex – violated understandings of women's proper place in society and signalled transgressive female behaviour which threatened family life, considered the bedrock of the nation (Molyneux, 2000). Therefore, ideology under military government simultaneously emphasised motherhood and traditional virtues of feminine care and devotion because modernity was both welcomed and feared (Alvarez, 1994; Htun, 2003). According to Molyneux, the strong focus on gender roles and relations meant that "the regulation of women, the female body and sexuality were inscribed in the process of State making" (2000:46).

Interestingly, however, in 1940, under the Vargas regime, Brazil was one of the earliest countries in the region to legalise abortion in cases of rape and in order to save the mother's life, following Argentina in the 1930s (Htun, 2003). Htun argues that the lack of contestation on this issue from the Catholic Church was perhaps because in general these governments upheld the idea that abortion was morally wrong, allowing the Church to feel that its position was safe, and because in this instance abortion was framed as a technical issue. The Catholic Church's opposition to abortion later grew stronger in response to the feminist reproductive rights movement and the liberalisation of abortion in north America and Europe (ibid).

Marriage and Divorce

As early as the Council of Trent (1563-81), the Catholic Church established the indissolubility of marriage, which also had to be performed by a Church official to be considered valid (Htun, 2003). However, according to Htun (2003) in Protestant regions, the indissolubility of marriage was rejected. In Europe, between the 16th and 18th centuries, jurisdiction over marriage was rejected. In Europe, between the 16th and 18th centuries, jurisdiction over marriage was gradually assumed by the secular State, and Catholic France legalised divorce in 1792 after the Revolution. However, in Latin America, secular states seized control over marriage only in the late nineteenth century (in 1890 in Brazil) and made civil marriage compulsory. The Church/State conflict over human rights, economic policy and authoritarian rule caused governments and bishops to clash and opened a space for liberal and feminist organisations to push for changes, as well as for the State to wrest further power from the Church (Alvarez, 1994; Hun, 2003). Argentina, Brazil and Chile were among the last countries to legalise divorce and this occurred under the military government in Brazil in 1977 (in Chile this did not occur until 2004). However, Htun points out that in Brazil, divorce was only achieved through annulment and separation, because the concept of the indissolubility of

marriage was still upheld, and this arguably left the Catholic Church with a moral and cultural authority over marriage that could never really be dissolved (2003: 53-57).

3.4.3 Social Movements, Gender and the Catholic Church

Catholic Liberation Theology and the Catholic Church/State Schism

The Roman Catholic bishops had been supportive of the military government and dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945) and they had welcomed the 1964 military coup against leftist president Goulart as necessary to eliminate a communist threat (Alvarez, 1994). The Catholic Church was also supportive of the governments of Castelo Branco (1964-972) and Costa e Silva (1967—9) (ibid). However, there was a profound State and Church break due the Catholic Church's reorientation after the Second Vatican Council in 1962-5 and the Latin American bishop's meeting in Medellín in 1968 (Htun, 2003). According to Htun, the Church's doctrine and organisational practices changed to include greater emphasis on lay participation, with a focus on a 'preferential option for the poor' and actions to benefit the poorest and most marginalised sectors of the population. This was the basis of Liberation Theology. Many priests and bishops criticised the human rights abuses committed by the military government and the traditional, historical allegiance between the Catholic Church and the military broke down. This meant that some Churches and priests came into conflict with the government's repressive policies and human rights abuses, whose economic policies had also added to the economic inequality. The Catholic Church formally opposed the Government and served as a hub for networks of social movements struggling to bring an end to authoritarian rule (Alvarez, 1994; Htun, 2003).

The influence of Liberation Theology and the expansion of CEBs¹⁵ (*Comunidades Eclesiásticas de Base*, Catholic Ecclesiastical Base Communities) during the 1960s-1980s, created the basis for the growth of many social and political movements towards the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of democratic construction (Alvarez, 1994). CEBs involved more than 2 million people in the early 1980s (ibid). In addition, organised Church-based popular groups sought to maintain the loyalty of parishioners by advocating for the poor in national politics, as they were also faced with high levels of competition from the growth of Protestant sects (Alvarez, 1994; Drogus, 1997; Htun, 2003). Brazil's Worker's Party (PT) (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) and workers' unions were formed around this time, as well as women's groups particularly in the form of Mothers' Clubs (*Clubes de Mães*). These women's movements demanded crèches, improved sanitary conditions, running water and access to universal healthcare (Alvarez, 1994; Drogus, 1997; Drogus and Gambino, 2005).

There has been debate on the differences between women's movements and feminist movements, especially in the Global South, where Molyneux (1985) argues that both movements have been closely associated with agendas for social reform. This means that both women's and feminist movements involve grassroots activism and claims on the State for women's rights and social rights more generally (ibid). However, in noting differences between the two forms of mobilisation, Molyneux points to the importance of differentiating between women's *strategic* and *practical* interests. Women's practical interests derive from their needs (hence mobilising around the need for crèches, healthcare and utilities in women's movements), while women's strategic interests are linked to the transformation of

¹⁵ CEBs were a form of de-centralised Church groups formed by community members which functioned relatively independently of official Church structure and priest leadership (Drogus, 1997).

gender relations and female emancipation (and therefore linked to the aims of feminist movements). These differences are discursively constructed within the historic origin of the movements and the different socio-economic and cultural contexts in which they have arisen. In addition, it is important to note that women's gender interests are instrumentalised by different institutions, for example political forces or religious institutions, who claim to promote women's interests in general, as though these were self-evident, unproblematic and uncontested (ibid).

In Brazil, the 1960s to 1980s represented a time of important social movement growth which made a lasting contribution to the strengthening of democracy and civil society (Alvarez, 1994; Drogus and Gambino, 2005). Gender unexpectedly emerged as a stronger force than class to bind poor, urban women together to demand social action (Drogus, 1997), and according to Drogus and Gambino (2005) one of the most important by-products of the CEBs was the personal empowerment of poor women, which allowed for increased political awareness and a strengthened sense of citizenship. However, Drogus (1997) notes that while Liberation Theology allowed women to carve out greater roles in the public sphere through mobilisation and demands on the State for social change, there were also attempts by the Church to squash rising gender consciousness. This is because mobilisation for women's needs was promoted in support of family and neighbourhood issues, which were linked to the belief in women's unique abilities – springing from their maternity – to perceive and rectify certain kinds of problems in these spheres (182). Mobilisation beyond this, into women's political and strategic needs was discouraged by the Church and hence the constraints inherent in women's culturally and religiously defined gender roles ultimately limited mobilisation and change (Drogus, 1997).

This period of social mobilisation was also marked by the simultaneous international focus on women's rights and women's health (Alvarez, 1994; Htun, 2003), and many social and legal changes in Brazil arose in conjunction with changes that were occurring worldwide. Htun (2003) argues that reforms in family law in Western Europe created "demonstration effects" (117) in Brazil: the process by which political change in some countries encourages change in other countries with similar problems or traditions, through contagion, diffusion, emulation and snowballing. Therefore, growing international conventions and treaties on women's rights and gender equality influenced change in the family, society and politics in Brazil.

For example, the first article of the *Bogota Convention on Women's Civil and Political Rights*, endorsed by the American States in 1948, called for full equality between men and women (Htun, 2003). Also in 1948, the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* affirmed that men and women were entitled to equal rights in marriage (ibid). The UN had marked 1975 as the start of the 'Decade for Women' leading to the creation of the 'UN Development Fund for Women' (UNIFEM) and the creation of the 'World Plan for Action against Gender-Based Violence' (Uribe-Uran, 2013). Further UN and world conferences were held to open a worldwide dialogue on gender equality and the advancement of women, and Brazilian women's organisations and feminist organisations took an active role, particularly in Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995 (ibid). In addition, in 1979, the UN's *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW)¹⁶ obliged States to eliminate all legal

¹⁶ CEDAW carries legal weight in signatory countries, meaning that citizens can file suits in national courts on the grounds that their rights have been violated under CEDAW, and judges can make decisions based on CEDAW in addition to or instead of local laws (Htun, 2003). A conversation I had with a judge in São Paulo who gave classes on gender and the law to judges-to-be, said that when discussed, none of the student judges had heard of or understood the legal implications of CEDAW.

restrictions on women's full and equal participation in the economy and society (ibid). This was endorsed by the General Assembly in 1979 and ratified by Brazil in 1984. Women's and feminist movements took an active role in promoting women's rights, especially as the country moved towards democracy in 1985.

The CEB-influenced women's groups all but disappeared with the end of Liberation Theology, as did the CEBs themselves, and a new era of Charismatic Catholicism was ushered in (Drogus and Gambino, 2005). This form of Catholicism focused more on a personal relationship with God and less on social activism (ibid). Pope John Paul II, elected in 1978, chose to counter Liberation Theology and replace its popular and participatory approach with a 'Polish model' that emphasised unity, hierarchy and discipline (Levine 1990: 35-35). Power was centralised in the Church, theologically conservative bishops were appointed to Latin American posts and measures were taken against outspoken proponents of Liberation Theology such as Gustavo Gutierrez in Peru and Leonardo Boff in Brazil (Htun, 2003). Pope John Paul II took a very hard, conservative line on divorce, abortion and birth control and the institutional changes implemented meant that these strict, official views were reflected at all levels of Church activity (ibid). Moreover, to counter global trends in discourse around gender and sexuality stemming from the worldwide UN conferences which religious leaders found concerning, Pope John Paul II initiated an alliance of conservative Catholic and Muslim groups (Htun, 2003).

According to interviews I conducted with female CEB members, the structural changes from Liberation Theology to Charismatic Catholicism were hard for poor women in Brazil, whose roles had expanded within the Church and the public sphere under Liberation Theology, but

who now found their growth stymied by the return of stricter, patriarchal Church control and centralised, hierarchical power returned to local male Church priests¹⁷.

3.4.4 Machismo and Masculinity

As I have indicated, gender orders – the structure of gender in a given society at a given time (Connell, 2012) – are reinforced through institutions such as the family, school, Church and the State. Another element that affects the construction of gender in Brazil is Latin American ‘machismo’ whereby some men demonstrate their masculinity through drinking, smoking, gambling and womanising (Brusco, 1995). Men are seen in public, on the street and in bars, whereas women are linked to the sphere of the home. Often, women might need permission from their husband to leave the home, to visit friends or to go shopping. Hautzinger (2007) points out that in Bahia, while a man can have multiple partners, a ‘cuckolded’ man is a source of great shame because it implies that he cannot control his woman, or worse, that he is being made a fool of by a woman. The man can only reclaim his honour by demonstrating his masculinity through severe (often physical) reprimand towards his partner in order to supposedly regain his own self-respect and to regain the respect of his peers.

This led Hautzinger (2007) to suggest that a woman’s public behaviour is often seen as an extension of her husband’s honour and hence, carefully controlled. Therefore, gendered expectations of how women should behave restrict women’s freedom of movement in social spaces. This demonstrates clear double standards in relation to male and female behaviour. Machismo is an important element in the construction of masculinity in Brazil and it means

¹⁷ This will be highlighted in particular in Chapter 6.

that men are considered real men by virtue of their sexual conquests. This generates tension around male and female sexuality and makes all women potential conquests. These attitudes are linked to the cultural stereotypes I have discussed on male and female sexuality and the historical processes and institutions (Church and State) that have helped to construct them.

However, it should be noted that machismo by no means the only form of masculinity. Many forms of subordinated and alternative masculinities also exist and contest cultural expectations and associations of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In fact, as highlighted in the previous chapter (2), some forms of Christianity often push men into a set of non-violent masculinities which can improve gender relations within households, although so far without fundamentally unsettling gender inequality (Brusco, 1995, Mariz and Machado, 1997). Brazil is fast becoming a highly modernised country, influenced by international thoughts and ideals. Women are entering university and jobs at unprecedented rates and Latin American machismo is becoming much less acceptable.

3.4.5 Democratisation, Catholic and Pentecostal Groups in Politics and Women's Rights

In 1985, when Brazil's first democratically-elected civilian president in over 20 years took office, he created a National Council on Women's Rights (*Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher* - CNDM) housed within the Ministry of Justice and staffed with feminists who had strong connections to women's social movements (Alvarez, 1994). They promoted women's rights in the new Constitution and within ordinary law which was seen as highly discriminatory towards women (Alvarez, 1994; Htun, 2003). For example, the Brazilian civil code of 1916 did not allow married women to be employed outside the home, to get a passport, travel outside

the country, accept or refuse inheritance, enter into contracts or even purchase or sell goods, unless they had their husband's authorisation (Htun, 2003). However, even though changes in civil law were slow to be enacted, feminist activism meant that the formulation of a new Constitution in 1988 allowed for the promotion of gender equality and all citizens – male and female – became constitutionally equal in rights and status for the first time (ibid).

Abortion

The new Constitution of 1988 was silent on the issue of abortion as feminist campaigning demanding greater abortion rights was countered by a religious lobby (made up mainly of Catholics and Evangelical Protestants) supporting the banning of abortion under any circumstances (Htun, 2003). In the end, both groups agreed to withdraw their petitions. Brazilian feminists frame the debate around abortion as a health issue, due to the high number of illegal, backstreet abortions that leave many women in need of medical help (Corrêa, 1994; Orozco, 2009). According to Tribe (1992) the Western argument of abortion as a rights-based issue does not carry much traction because it involves a “clash of absolutes” (3). It provokes moral outrage and political polarisation: feminists and liberals see abortion as a question of individual liberty, privacy and public health, while conservatives maintain that prohibitions on abortion are necessary to protect human life, defend human rights, and uphold moral and family values (ibid). This discourse also maintains patriarchal and hierarchical male control over women, and power over women's bodies and sexuality.

Even when legally allowed, abortions are often not carried out due to religious ethics on the part of the doctors involved (Orozco, 2009). Catholics for Choice (CFC) (*Católicas Pelo Direito de Decidir*) a catholic-based NGO which fights for the legalisation of abortion within a Catholic

framework, also note that in several cases where abortions have been performed on minors and/or victims of rape, the child and her mother have then been ex-communicated by the Church (Orozco, 2009), demonstrating the way in which women and girls who 'appear' to transgress religiously imposed norms and values are punished through structural and symbolic means. It has been argued that the symbolic act of interrupting pregnancy is particularly controversial in Brazil where maternity is strongly linked to the historical-cultural, female identity (Scavone, 2008). This is linked to a regional trend: only Brazil, Panama and some States of Mexico allow abortion in the case of rape and to save mother's life. In Cuba (1979) and Uruguay (2012), abortion is legal, but in the rest of the continent, abortion is illegal and women can be prosecuted if suspected of attempting to do so (Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2015).

Women's Roles and Economic Change in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries

Since the 1980s, Brazil has experienced democratisation, the liberalisation of free-market economy, globalisation, and dramatic change in gender roles, in particular relating to the workplace. For Brazilian women, the changes have been enormous. According to a World Bank Report (2013), in 1960, only 17 per cent of women worked outside of the home, one of the lowest rates of female participation in Latin America, and women had an average of six children. Nowadays, 44 per cent of women form part of the labour force and the fertility rate has dropped to just 1.8 children per woman, the lowest in the region apart from Cuba (ibid). Women are ahead in education too, with girls outperforming boys at school and representing 60 per cent of university graduates. The opening up of markets and trade and greater access to education has pushed women into work and given them increasing access to power, particularly in the form of economic independence, although the gender pay gap is still

considerable (ibid). Interestingly, researchers have also pointed out that in rapid shifts towards gender egalitarianism, temporary increases in violence may occur (for example Strauss, 1993; Yllö, 1993).

Initially hailed as one of the 'BRICs'¹⁸ (Brazil, Russia, India, China), until recently Brazil had been seen as a potential 'country of the future' (Bittencourt, 2016) as other more established economies stagnated. However, since 2015, the economy has struggled, in part due to massive corruption scandals, notably at *Petrobras*, the State petrol company, which revealed that the equivalent of billions of US dollars were being diverted into private funds (ibid). Although not found to have taken part the scandal, ex-President Dilma Rousseff was impeached, and accused of economic mismanagement. She has since been replaced by the vice-President Michel Temer, who is now also tainted with a corruption scandal.

Economists and politicians predict recession and higher unemployment in 2017 and beyond, even though Brazil is still one of the top 10 economies in the world by Gross Domestic Product, although way down the list for GDP per capita (Bittencourt, 2016). Before the recent economic woes, the country's development had led to a reduction in poverty levels through conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes for Brazil's poorest, as well as low unemployment and greater access to credit for many Brazilians (Souza & Lamounier, 2010). The wealth gap between rich and poor is still great, although the last twenty years saw the rise of a new economic middle class, in particular the 'C class' (ibid). The C class represents working class families who had become more financially comfortable, whose children were the first

¹⁸ Developing countries with fast-growing economies and growing international influence.

generation to go to university, families who now owned cars and maybe even their own homes. For the first time, there are now more middle class people than poor, although the spectrum of middle class varies considerably (ibid). However, the economy's recession since 2015 means that this burgeoning Class C has been heavily affected.

Patriarchy within Government Agencies for Women

The development of women's political strength has not been linear. For example, under the governments of Collor (1990-2) and Franco (1992-4), the CNDM was side-lined, with budget and staff cuts until the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) when it was partially revitalised (Htun, 2003). In 2003, under the Lula government, the CNDM was turned into a Ministry, the official name being the State Secretariat (Ministry) for Women's Rights (*Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos da Mulher – SIDIM*). Regrettably, in 2015, the government of Michel Temer dissolved the Women's Ministry and the Ministry of Racial Equality, subordinating them to the Ministry for Justice and Citizenship. Temer's government is made up of all-white and all-male officials, and many social movement groups are worried about a 'retrocession of rights' for women and minority groups (Católicas Pelo Direito de Decidir, 2017). Temer is strongly Catholic and has the backing of the Evangelical lobby who like his conservative stance, which fits an international growing trend towards religious conservatism (e.g. as witnessed in countries such as the US, Turkey and Russia)¹⁹.

¹⁹ Since Trump's ascension to the U.S. presidency in 2016, funding to women's health centres (e.g. Planned Parenthood) which support abortion has been limited or cut (Davis, 2017). In addition, days after being sworn in, Trump signed Mexico City Policy, also known as the 'Global Gag Rule' which blocks US funding from going to any NGO around the world that provides abortion counselling, even if the money is not used for abortion-related services (Davis, 2017). These moves have been strongly supported by fundamentalist Christian groups. In Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a conservative Islamist, abolished the ministry of women in 2014, replacing it with the ministry of family and social policies (similar to moves by President Temer in Brazil, see Chapter 2), and declared that

Temer appointed Fátima Pelaes to lead what remains of the Women's Ministry, an ex-Federal Deputy who claims that although she was previously a feminist and even supported women's right to abortion, she now defends the right to life from conception and was previously President of the Evangelical Parliamentary Front (*Frente Parlamentar Evangélica*) (Melo, 2016). According to the sociologist Eleonora Menicucci, who was the Women's Minister under Dilma Rousseff, the Secretariat's move to the Ministry of Justice signals the government's focus on repressive, police tactics as solutions to violence (ibid). For example, a federal plan devised by Pelaes to deal with VAW aims to pay military police and policemen from the National Safety Force (*Força Nacional de Segurança*) a daily rate on their 'off' days to patrol areas with high levels of domestic violence (ibid). Feminist organisations have expressed their dismay at Pelaes' appointment and the growth of the 'militarisation' in policing forms of violence which feminist organisations believe is not the best answer to the problem of VAW and potentially exacerbates it (Católicas Pelo Direito de Decidir, 2017).

men and women were not equal. In 2016, Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) tried to amend the penal code to make it possible [for men who rape girls under 18 to be exonerated if they marry their victims](#); they are also tried to [reduce the alimony payments](#) a divorced man must make to his wife; and mandate a wife—even one who is a victim of domestic violence—go through a government "reconciliation process" before leaving her husband (Asquith & Fairweather, 2017). Although these measures did not pass, the recent constitutional changes could imply that legislation such as this will pass more easily (Zillman, 2017). In addition, in Russia, Putin has approved legal changes that decriminalise some forms of domestic violence, where according to some estimates, a woman dies every 40 minutes from domestic abuse. The amendment makes 'moderate' violence within families (described as beatings that result in bruising or bleeding but not broken bones) an administrative rather than criminal offence, punishable by 15 days in prison or a fine, if they do not happen more than once a year. Previously, they carried a maximum jail sentence of two years (Walker, 2017).

The Public Debate over 'Gender'

Feminist organisations are also concerned about Pelaes' stance against abortion and links to the Evangelical Parliamentary Front. In Congress, a strong Evangelical political lobby (*Bancada Evangélica*) campaigns sometimes in conjunction with the Catholic and Family lobbies (*Bancada Católica* and *Bancada da Família*) to limit rights that it does not agree with, such as access to the morning after pill, abortion, and marriage rights for gay couples (ibid). This activism in politics and the public sphere means that Evangelical Protestant organisations are a force to be reckoned with in Brazil and the perceived growth in religious fundamentalism is linked in particular to these groups. In fact, the growth of Pentecostals in positions of power in government, along with a historically strong Catholic lobby, has led Brazilian feminists to decry a turn to Christian conservatism which they say impinges on women's rights (Orozco, 2009).

In 2005, UCKG, the Pentecostal Church studied in this thesis, became officially linked to a political party, the Brazilian Republican Party (*Partido Republicano Brasileiro – PRB*). In 2012, *Assembleia de Deus* (AD) became linked to another party, the National Ecological Party (*Partido Ecológico Nacional – PEN*) (Vital & Lopes, 2013). Mariano (2011) argues that the political strength of these parties and the *Bancada Evangélica* (evangelical lobby) – (also sometimes referred to colloquially as the *Bancada BBB – Bala, Bíblia e Boi* (Bullets, Bible and Bulls lobby) – was only possible because secular parties sought to make alliances with them in order to co-opt their electoral support, believing that followers would vote as pastors told them to. UCKG positioned itself as strongly favourable to Dilma Rousseff's candidacy in 2014 (Vital and Lopes, 2013), although they distanced themselves from her during her impeachment in 2015. More recently, Marcelo Crivella, a conservative senator and Edir

Macedo's nephew, was voted mayor of Rio de Janeiro (Charner, 2016). Although playing down his links to UCKG, social activists in Brazil are concerned as Crivella has categorised homosexuality a sin and a 'terrible ail' in his book *Evangelizing Africa* (1999). UCKG has been accused of attempting to influence politics, as well as intolerance towards Catholics and especially towards followers of Afro-Spiritist religions (Almeida, 2009).

Controversy over understandings of gender roles, relations and gendered identities have caused great polemic. For example, material in the form of pamphlets, books and videos were produced for schools by the Ministry of Education and LGBT activists, aimed at reducing homophobia in schools (*Projeto Escola Sem Homofobia*). However, in 2010, Catholic and Evangelical lobbies dubbed it the "gay-kit" (Vital & Lopes, 2013:109), arguing that it was an attack on families, against God's will and encouraged children to become gay (ibid:109-120). In addition, in 2016, states across the country were asked to produce their 'Municipal Education Plans' (Boehm, 2017). In the run up to the creation of the plans, Catholic and Evangelical lobbies argued strongly against the inclusion of teaching what they refer to as "gender ideology" and any issues related to gender equality or sexuality (ibid). Such positions within Evangelical Protestant Churches are similar within the Catholic Church. Pope Francis has warned that "gender theory" is a part of a "global war" against traditional marriage and family values and warned against the "ideological colonisation" of developing countries by the West (Osbourne, 2016). The Christian lobbies claimed that school was not the place to discuss questions of gender and their campaign was successful: across the country, the issues of gender and sexuality have been left out of the education plans and therefore the subjects are not addressed in school (ibid).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that VAW has sadly been a constant aspect of Brazilian history from colonialism to the present day. Gender roles and relations have been influenced by patriarchal institutions including the State and the Catholic Church and later by the growth of Evangelical Protestantism. Power and control over women has been symbolically, structurally and normatively concentrated in patriarchal and hierarchical institutions, with strong racial and class-based intersections. Conversely, these organisations have also been influenced by changing political and socio-economic climates, as well as national and international feminist movements and changing global gender norms, which have led to both growth and retrocession of women's rights.

Democratisation, coupled with a growing international 'rights' discourse, has made the private realm 'political', and laws have been created in order to address the issue of VAW. These changes mean that attitudes towards violence are in a process of change, underscoring the importance of this research in uncovering evolving views towards gender roles and relations, particularly among professionals who work with VAW. A study of gender is fundamental as different forms of violence have gendered characteristics and impacts. Both feminists and conservative Christians blame interpersonal violence on beliefs around gendered behaviour and change, which points to my thesis that focusing on prevention of VAW has political ramifications. This will be explored more in the next chapters.

In Brazil today, what it means to be a woman appears to be highly contested, as global processes of female emancipation and evolving gender roles conflict with more conservative

constructions of gender. For example, the patriarchal nature of Catholicism and conservative Protestantism clash with feminist demands for the right of control over their bodies, such as the demand for the right to abortion. This gender-traditional conservatism is at odds with feminist activism, and the concepts of gender, gender equality, feminism, human rights and women's rights appear confused and polarised. I now turn to chapter (4), which will present the methodological choices of this study, the methods, and the framework through which analysis of the collected data was made.

CHAPTER FOUR: A FEMINIST POST-STRUCTURALIST PERSPECTIVE AND FOUCAULT'S 'PASTORAL POWER'

No research is better positioned to touch on the knottiest of feminist methodological issues than the exploration of women, religion and politics (Kaufman, 2007: 683).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the analytical framework and methodological choices applied to this study. In the interests of rigorous research, all stages of the inquiry process require consideration, from the theoretical position and perspective of the researcher to the investigative strategies employed, as well as the methods used for data analysis and write-up. Therefore, each phase of the research, from theoretical background, to design and implementation, as well as data analysis, is considered.

As presented in the introduction of this thesis, the rationale for this study was to examine how faith influences gendered understandings of violence based on the discourses²⁰

²⁰ Foucault defines discourses as practices that systematically form the object of which they speak (2007, [2004] [1977-1978]). This thesis draws on this definition as well as Judith Baxter's definition, adding that "discourses are forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations, governing mainstream social and cultural practices. They are systematic ways of making sense of the world by inscribing and shaping power relations within all texts, including spoken

concerning these topics in circulation in the organisations studied, and the effects these discourses have on women's ability to deal with violence, and their sense of identity and subjectivity in relation to gender, religion and violence. In addition, fieldwork raised the question of how different actors and organisations – NGOs and FBOs – help to construct social welfare provision and the impact this has on women's rights. Therefore, the research questions for this study are:

1. **In centres aimed at helping survivors of domestic violence, how do the service users and professional staff negotiate religion, violence and gender?**
2. **What effect do the different discourses on religion, violence and gender have on abused women's sense of identity and subjectivity?**
3. **How do NGOs and FBOs incorporated into State services influence social welfare provision in terms of women's rights?**

Section 4.2 focuses on the epistemology and analytical framework chosen. There is a natural emphasis on listening to and analysing the discourses available to the women on the subjects of religion, violence and gender. The study of women's subjectivity and the influence of discourse link into themes of power and the impact of the role of institutions, which lends itself to an intersectional, feminist, post-structuralist framework as a useful prism through which to understand the relations of power in the centres under study. In addition, I found it useful to conduct my analysis using Foucauldian theory on the role of *pastoral power* (Foucault, 2007 [2004]). Within institutions. The concept of pastoral power helps to analyse

interactions. Discourses are in turn closely associated with discursive practices: social practices that are produced by/through" (2003:7).

the construction of women's gendered subjectivity within centres addressing VAW. In section 4.3, I examine methodological considerations such as my own positionality as a white, middle-class researcher, and I describe the methods used to conduct the research. In Section 4.4, I present the research design and contextualise the three organisations under study, the rationale for choosing them and the challenges of conducting research in São Paulo, one of the most populated cities in the world. Next, in Section 4.5, I highlight the choices made during the process of data analysis. Finally, Section 4.6 provides the conclusion.

4.2 Epistemology

4.2.1 An Intersectional, Feminist Post-Structuralist Perspective

Feminism, postmodernism and post-structuralism have all challenged the modernist, epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning social science research. Such forms of critical theorising have radically changed the idea of researchers as 'objective,' knowing selves who discover the 'true' nature of the world through rationality (humanism) or sense experience (empiricism). Post-structuralism developed out of post-modernism, although it is not specific to a single school of thought or academic discipline and is underpinned by many theoretical positions (e.g. Derrida, 1982; Foucault, 1984; Kristeva, 1984). However, post-structuralism specifically focuses on language as the 'site' for the construction and contestation of social meanings (Baxter, 2003). Furthermore, feminist post-structuralism calls into question the grand narratives through which the humanist/modernist individual sees him or herself and demonstrates how individuals are created by the social and geographical worlds around them: in particular, the process by which they are made into

gendered subjects (ibid) ²¹. It is for these reasons that a feminist, post-structuralist lens is most appropriate for this study, which places women's experiences at the heart of it.

Feminist theory highlights the politics and problematics of gender and "remains the only lens that (...) offers a means of analysis of the complicated ways gender, race, sexuality, class and embodiment are distinct yet intertwined in dominant structures of power" (Pillow & Mayo, 2007: 156). As Pillow & Mayo (2007) highlight, consistent across feminist theory is a focus on gender and its intersectionalities as central to the praxis and theory of research. In addition, feminist and queer theory have demonstrated the importance of asking not just what gender is, but how it operates, not necessarily inhering in "appropriate" bodies and no longer simply identifying a set of characteristics common to the category of woman (ibid). Instead, it suggests paying attention to the complex interactions of identities that constitute gender, seeking to understand gender as performative, altered by intersections with race, sexuality, class and embodiment (Pillow & Mayo, 2007).

Most feminist perspectives foreground the role of gender in women's lives. Moreover, Black and post-colonial feminism insist that gender must be studied intersectionally with other forms of identity and inequality, such as class, race, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality. Therefore, feminists such as Anzaldua (1987), Crenshaw (1996), Collins (1990), hooks (1994) and Saffioti (1976), argued that women experience different forms of inequality depending on their position in relation to multiple identities and inequalities which must be taken into account, just as much as gender. Alongside gender, race and class are relevant in this study,

²¹ It should be noted that feminism itself can also be considered a 'grand narrative'.

which is concerned with the lives of low-income and predominantly mixed-race women from urban São Paulo, therefore I will also take into account an intersectional perspective.

According to Weedon (1997 [1987]), one of the main advocates of feminist post-structuralism, the concept theorises the relationship between language, subjectivity, social organisation and power. Feminist post-structuralism comes from third-wave feminism²², based especially on Butler's (1990) argument that gender is a 'performative' construction. Post-structuralist feminism is therefore more concerned with deconstructing gender identities and relations within specific communities of practice (ibid). Post-structuralism "troubles the binary categories male and female, making visible the constitutive force of linguistic practices, and dismantling their apparent inevitability" (Davies and Gannon, 2005:312). Feminist post-structuralism therefore focuses on context-specific gender issues, rather than more generalised questions, and processes of co-construction, or the way in which identities are negotiated and constructed through social interactions (Baxter, 2003).

The Intersections Between Discourse, Language, Gender and Subjectivity

Discourses, located in social institutions and processes, are continually competing for the allegiance of individual agents (Baxter, 2003; Davies and Gannon, 2005; Weedon 1997, [1987]). The political interests and social implications of any discourse will not be realised

²² Pre-modernist or first-wave feminism by Western standards is considered to have emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, strongly linked to the suffragette movement in the U.S. and Western Europe (Baxter, 2003). Modernist, or second-wave feminism is generally associated with the political and economic drive to end sex discrimination and promote equal opportunities, which began in the 1960s (ibid). Third-wave feminism is characterised by its focus on the diversity and multiplicity of women's identities and the performative nature of gender rather than the essentialist or possessive nature of gender (ibid)

without the agency of individuals who are subjectively motivated to reproduce or transform social practices and the social power which underpins them (Davies and Gannon, 2005). Individuals can only identify their own interests in discourse by becoming the subject of particular discourses (ibid). According to the authors, individuals therefore become both the site and subjects of discursive struggle for their identity (Baxter, 2003; Davies and Gannon, 2005; Weedon, 1997). They are constantly subjected to discourse and can employ contradictory modes of subjectivity at different moments. Discourse constitutes the ways of being a subject and modes of subjectivity, which imply specific organisation of the emotional as well as the mental and psychic capacities of the individual (Davies and Gannon, 2005). Therefore, analysis of the discourses available to the women in the centre is of importance in this study as they link into the construction of women's subjectivity in the centres under study.

The authors also point out that some modes of subjectivity are more readily available to the individual than others, this will depend on the social status and power of the discourse in question (Baxter, 2003; Davies and Gannon, 2005; Weedon 1997). Whereas in principle the individual is open to all forms of subjectivity, in reality, individual access to subjectivity is governed by historically specific social factors and the forms of power at work in a particular society (ibid). Following this belief, the meaning of gender is therefore socially produced and variable between different forms of discourse (Davies and Gannon, 2005). Agency is located in the recognition of the power of discourse (ibid). This means that the way in which we live our lives as conscious, thinking subjects, depends on our access to existing discourses, the range and social power these have and the political strength of the interests these discourses represent (Weedon, 1997:26). Weedon provides an example which is highly relevant to this

study, demonstrating the importance of different understandings of gender roles and relations and even their link to 'domestic' violence:

The way in which a woman experiences and responds to domestic violence will depend on the ways of understanding it to which she has access. This will involve her self-image and conceptions of femininity and her beliefs about masculinity and family life. If she sees men as naturally violent or herself as responsible for provoking violence, then she is unlikely to see it as an unacceptable exercise of illegitimate power which cannot be tolerated. If she sees masculinity and femininity as natural, fixed and not open to change, then domestic violence will be a personal issue which is not a question of politics at all (Weedon, 1997:76).

According to Weedon (1997 [1987]), discourses are therefore more than ways of thinking and producing meaning: they constitute understandings of the nature of the body, the unconscious and conscious mind and the emotional life of the subjects that these discourses (and those who reproduce them) seek to govern. A foundational concept of poststructuralism is that language is not the expression of unique individuality, but rather that language constructs an individual's subjectivity in ways that are socially specific (Weedon, 1997: 21). This means that neither social reality nor the 'natural' world have fixed, intrinsic meanings which language reflects or expresses. Different discourses are expressed through language which cannot be reduced to universally shared concepts reflecting a fixed reality (ibid). For example, the meanings of femininity and masculinity vary between discourses within a particular language, or between secular and religious discourses, and their meanings vary between different languages and different cultures (ibid). Taking femininity or masculinity to have a fixed meaning denies these variations and historical change, which are visible through

role, behavioural and attitudinal change in men and women throughout history (Weedon, 1997:22).

Drawing heavily on the work of Foucault, Weedon (1997, [1987]) argues that subjectivity is constructed through discourse and the combination of a person's social, material, historical and geographical location. Subjectivity refers to the conscious and unconscious thoughts of the individual, her sense of self and her ways of understanding her relation to the world (Weedon, 1997:32). This means that subjectivity is neither unified nor fixed, but rather a site of disunity and conflict, constructed through a range of discursive practices which are economic, social and political, the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power (Weedon, 1997: 21). Subjectivity is therefore part of the society and culture in which we live, produced historically and changing with shifts in the discursive fields available to individuals (Weedon, 1997: 32).

As this study seeks to understand the way in which abused women's subjectivity is constructed and negotiated by both professionals and service users of three different centres offering help for women in situations of violence, this understanding of subjectivity is foundational to this thesis. It allows me, the author, to consider the identities and subject positions available to the women in these organisations, and opens possibilities for discussion around themes of power, empowerment, identity and subjectivity, especially within the context of gender and violence. Therefore, feminist post-structuralism's focus on the relationship between language, power and subjectivity, is highly appropriate for this study.

In addition, particular attention is paid to the concept of power, which, drawing on a post-structural, Foucauldian perspective, is understood as being constructed not as a possession, but as something that flows in several directions at once “in a net or web-like fashion” (Baxter, 2003:5). In order to examine power relations within the centres under study, and between the professionals offering help for domestic violence and the women who experience it, Foucault’s theory of pastoral power is invaluable, as it allows the researcher to consider power relations within institutions and individuals, and as I will demonstrate, simultaneously it is strongly related to the role of religion within institutions, and the way in which this was later transferred within secular institutions and in particular, the welfare State.

Pastoral Power

In his studies on power, Foucault argues for a form of governing which he called ‘pastoral power’, explained in detail in his *Lectures at the College de France on Security, Territory and Population*, between 1977-1978 (Foucault, 2007 [2004]). This describes a set of techniques of self-care, rationalities and practices that were adopted and institutionalised within Christianity and later taken up and disseminated within modern States (ibid). According to Foucault, the concept of the pastorate was first found in ancient Hebrew and Mesopotamian cultures and represented a form of governing that was very different from the traditional focus on territory. Instead, the focus of the pastorate was on governing people and looking after their well-being. In order to guide individuals towards salvation, techniques of self-care influencing every aspect of people’s lives from birth to death were exercised through what Foucault called pastoral power (ibid). Unlike sovereign power, the earlier form of power wielded by Kings, which had treated bodies as objects of violence or honour (Hoffman, 2014), pastoral power treated the body as an object of care.

Foucault argues that the pastoral art of governing living human beings was taken up by the State itself in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, marking the beginning of the modern State and leading Foucault to suggest viewing the State “as a modern matrix of individualisation, or a new form of pastoral power” (Foucault, 1982:215 in Biebricher, 2011). Therefore, as governments began to focus on the wellbeing of their citizens, this pastoral power was adopted and modified in the form of pastoral government, and the techniques passed from religious to secular contexts. Foucault argues that pastoral power moved into the secular sphere and was spread out and disseminated through government institutions, for example the Welfare State (Foucault, 2007: 307).

Interestingly, the concept of pastoral power has more often been used in the analysis secular, social, health and educational settings (e.g. Schutz, 2005; Caughlan, 2005; Cole, 2011; Cook & Brunton, 2015). Caughlan (2005) argues that the ‘agents of pastoral power’ multiplied to include the police, social workers, health care workers and teachers, all of whom had a focus on wellbeing. As pastoral power can be used to analyse power relations and the creation of subjectivities within both religious and ‘secular’ institutions, I have therefore chosen to apply the concept of pastoral power in the analysis of the centres under study. Following Foucault, the social workers and professional staff within centres addressing VAW can be considered ‘agents of pastoral power’. In Chapters 7 and 8, I will go into a greater exploration of the concept of pastoral power and use it as a heuristic device in order to analyse the relations of power and processes of subjectification of abused women within the centres under study (see chapters 7 and 8).

4.3 Research Design

The study took place in São Paulo over seven months from October 2014 to May 2015, with one extra month spent exploring fieldwork possibilities in February 2014. Three sites were used: I chose to study two 'Women's Defence and Community Centres' (*Centro de Defesa e Convivencia da Mulher - CDCMs*) in different, low-income areas of São Paulo, one in the South (*Zona Sul*) and one in the East (*Zona Leste*). The centre in the East, which I have renamed the *Women's Collective* has a feminist, activist outlook and the centre in the South, which I have renamed the *Family Alliance* is Catholic-based.

In addition, I attended *Project Rahab* meetings at *Universal Church Kingdom of God* (UCKG) and other weekly religious meetings at the Church that will be described in detail in Chapter 6. I also participated in feminist meetings and events (e.g. demonstrations for *International Women's Day on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* as well as demonstrations for women's right to abortion). I conducted translation work for *Catholics for Choice* (CFC) to further deepen my understanding of issues surrounding feminism and religion in Brazil. Simultaneously, I participated in Pentecostal mobilisations by women from UCKG around similar themes. I was keen to understand the ways in which gender and violence were articulated both in the centres and in the public sphere and to understand how Brazilian activists, both religious and secular, reconciled their faith and their feminist agendas. Figures 5 and 6 below show some of these demonstrations.

Figure 5 Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, São Paulo



Source: Picture Taken by Author, São Paulo, 25th November 2014

Figure 6 Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, São Paulo



Source: Picture Taken by Author, São Paulo, 25th November 2014

4.3.1 Why São Paulo?

São Paulo is the cosmopolitan, beating heart of Brazil. A city with 21 million inhabitants (IBGE, 2010) it is the most populous city in Brazil, in the Americas and in the Western and Southern hemisphere (World Atlas, 2015). It ranks among the top ten most populated cities in the world (ibid), and its soaring skyscrapers along with its clogged traffic and air pollution demonstrate Brazil's lust for modernity at its best and at its worst. Capital of the state of São Paulo, it is also Brazil's wealthiest city. In few cities can the world's richest and the world's poorest be seen living cheek by jowl, in fenced condominiums often surrounded by sprawling *favelas* (slums) and an extensive *periferia* – a negative connotation in Portuguese referring to areas far from the city centre in which lower-income families live and commute into work. Workers in São Paulo face some of the longest commuting times in the world due to a lack of transportation services for a city with such a high-density population (Urban Demographics, 2014). São Paulo's size also means that the penetration and availability of State services in many areas is low.

Yet, São Paulo's size is also the reason the city is so dynamic and modern. Feminist groups have considerable support and expression here, local and federal policies tend to be implemented earlier than in other parts of the country and it is also home to the headquarters of several of Brazil's most popular Pentecostal churches, including UCKG. The combination of these factors made it the key location for this research project. In addition, VAW was something of a hot topic in Brazil during my fieldwork. Brazilian social media was abuzz with debate on the position of women in society, machismo and patriarchy. For example, hashtags such as *#primeroassedio* (*#firstassault*) began in Brazil after shocking comments were posted

online discussing the fantasy rape of a 12-year-old contestant on the cooking show *Junior Masterchef*. This caused an online movement which used the hashtag around the world.

São Paulo Metropolitan Region (Região Metropolitana de São Paulo - RMSP)

My research at the women's centres was conducted in two similar areas, the South Zone and the East Zone, which are far from the city centre. By the 1970s, both areas had strong popular organizing, and mobilisations through CEBs demanded improvements in public services, housing, waste, water, energy (electricity) and education. Statistics on living conditions in the East Zone and the South Zone are very similar and will be discussed below.

I attended meetings for *Project Rahab* at UCKG's headquarters in *Brás*, in a low-income neighbourhood in the city centre. The RMSP is composed of the city of São Paulo and 38 municipalities (Vilhena, 2011). The RMSP is one of the biggest urban agglomerations in the world, and covers 1,509 km², divided into 31 sub-prefectures (ibid). The periphery areas of the city are those that have seen the highest population growth in the last 20 years, especially as the central area presents negative population growth (ibid). The sheer vastness of the city meant that it sometimes took me between 2-3 hours to get to my destination, using a combination of public transport (tube, trains and buses). The further into the periphery one travels, the more ramshackle and tightly knit the houses become.

4.3.2 Women's Defence and Community Centres (CDCMs)

CDCMs offer psychological help, social welfare assistance and legal advice for women experiencing violence (Prefeitura de São Paulo, 2017). The centres run workshops and classes,

aimed at increasing women's self-confidence and teaching skills such as handicrafts for income generation. Women are assessed and directed towards the help deemed necessary. A few sessions are one-to-one, but as demand for services is high, much of the therapy is conducted in groups. All the services are free and women can attend (and are encouraged to join) as many of the classes as they want. Therefore, while some service users only come for individual therapy sessions or special events once or twice a month, others come several times a week or some even come every day.

Before being impeached, former-President Dilma Rousseff had promised more funding to create more CDCMs. However, due to the current President Temer's austerity measures and the demotion of the Women's Secretariat to within the Ministry of Justice and Citizenship, further funding looks unlikely²³. CDCMs are generally staffed with professional, local women from the area, who are keenly aware of the issues affecting families and the women they deal with, including high levels of poverty, drink and drug abuse, difficulty accessing State services as well as inadequate services, poor sanitation, precarious housing and crime.

Location 1: The 'Zona Sul' and the Family Alliance

The *Family Alliance* is located in the South Zone (*Zona Sul*). The *Zona Sul* experienced tremendous population growth during the 'economic miracle' of the 1970s (Vilhena, 2011). However, large numbers of workers lost their jobs due to the mechanization of industry and the economic crisis of the '80s and '90s (ibid). Vilhena (2011), argues that in order to survive many people worked in informal sectors and others got involved in crime and drug-trafficking.

²³ See Chapter 3.

In addition, the lack of public policies for the region and the high rates of unemployment, poverty as well as the low levels of schooling, precariousness of housing, the lack of leisure areas, and the difficulty of access to the Justice system are some of the reasons why part of this region's population became involved with crime and violence (ibid).

The *Family Alliance* originally began its days as a crèche, created by volunteers from the local CEB in the late '90s. Like many social movement projects that grew dramatically in the second half of the 20th century in Brazil, the creation of the centre was due to activism by this dynamic church group, influenced by Liberation Theology. The CEB in the Southern Zone responsible for the *Family Alliance* is one of few still active in the country. Since the 1970s, the organisation has worked tirelessly, demanding improvements in public services, such as housing, waste, water, energy and education (Vilhena, 2011).

The South Zone includes part of the hydrographic basin of the Guarapiranga dam, which together with the Billings dam is responsible for providing about 30 per cent of RMSP's water (Vilhena, 2011). It is part of a protected water source area, but despite the restrictions in place from environmental legislation, there has been a tremendous amount of urbanization which has occurred in a disorderly manner, with many illegal occupations and precarious housing on the waterside (ibid). This has compromised the natural production of water, causing erosion, deforestation, soil sealing, and led to waste and rubbish dumping which has caused heavy silting in the water (ibid). According to the São Paulo Housing Bureau, in 2000 this municipality in the South Zone had the highest number of favelas of RMSP (Vilhena, 2011).

In 1996, the UN called this area the most dangerous neighbourhood in the world and today its HDI ranks the area 94th out of 96 neighbourhoods in the city of São Paulo (Vilhena, 2011). In 2011, the HDI (Human Development Index) for the municipality was 0,402 while the average for Brazil was 0,792 (Vilhena, 2011). In 2010, the average monthly income was R\$430 (approx. US\$ 129) compared to the São Paulo state average of R\$850 (approx. US\$ 255) (SEADE, 2016). In 2014, the death rate for 15 to 34 year olds in area was a shocking 164 per 100,000, compared to a state average of 118 per 100,000 and the municipality rate of 121 per 100,000 inhabitants (SEADE, 2016). At least 20 per cent of heads of households have no income whatever, residents generally have an average of 6 years of schooling and around 10 per cent of people are completely illiterate (Vilhena, 2011). According to data I gained at the centre, most of the women attending the *Family Alliance* are economically dependent on their partners as they are the main carers for the family, many have been out of work for many years or survive on odd jobs and some are self-employed.

Location 2: The East Zone and the Women's Collective

Formed in 2004, the *Women's Collective* was founded after a survey conducted in the area revealed that a disproportionately high number of women appeared to be experiencing forms of domestic violence²⁴. *Zona Leste*, the Eastern periphery where the centre was founded, has an important history of social movements and a strong women's movement linked to the historical *Clubes de Mãe* (Mothers' Clubs) (Correia, 2015). Campaigning against domestic violence led to the creation of an NGO, which was then awarded a State contract to provide

²⁴ During an informal conversation Ana, the Centre Manager, said that out of 800 anonymous responses, around 70 per cent of women were estimated to have suffered or be suffering forms of IPV.

help for women in situations of violence as part of the welfare system. Discussing the creation of the *Women's Collective*, Ana, the centre manager said:

The centre was created out of necessity, very aware of the need for its existence and with strong support from the women's movement and feminists, so it's always had that character, of being at the forefront of the feminist fight (Ana, Centre Manager, Women's Collective 13/11/2014).

However, survival of the centre is precarious, salaries are low, local State funding limited and the centre faces a constant battle for funds in the face of suffers regular budget cuts, linked to varying levels of political will to address VAW²⁵. Placing emphasis on its 'community' aspect, Ana explained that the centre was for *all* women in the area and not just those experiencing violence, because their aim is to raise consciousness around the issue of VAW and mobilise around issues that affect the whole community. For this reason, events are held that do not exist in other centres, such as the monthly Lilac Tea forum where guests are invited to come and discuss broader social problems in the area.

The Eastern periphery of São Paulo is well-known for being a low-income, high-crime area, one of the most precarious areas of São Paulo. More than 15 per cent of the population live in *favelas* – informal, low-income communities – and around 8 per cent of people are illiterate (SEADE, 2016). In addition, there are high rates of teenage pregnancies, a lack of job opportunities and high levels of urban and criminal violence, including homicide rates far

²⁵ Since conducting fieldwork, the centre's budget has been further reduced, linked to Brazil's economic woes and the slashing of funds for women's centres by President Temer (see chapter 3).

above the São Paulo average (SEADE, 2016). For example, the population mortality of those aged 15 to 34 was almost 140 per 100,000 in 2014 in the district, compared to 120 per 100,000 in the municipality and 118 per 100,000 in the state (SEADE, 2016). Salaries are low: the average salary in 2010 was just over R\$400 (approx. US\$127 in today's currency). In addition, the staff estimated that at least 60 per cent of the women at the centre had partners involved in crime.

Therefore, consistent with Scheper-Hughes's concept of 'everyday violence' (1993), abused women at the *Women's Collective* living in the *Zona Leste* and at the *Family Alliance* in *Zona Sul* suffer multiple and overlapping forms of violence. This includes IPV generally experienced in the home, violence occurring in public spaces due to crime and altercations between gangs and the police, and structural, institutional violence due to poor access to services (e.g. health, education), as well as the racial and social stigmas of being poor and black or mixed race. As pointed out in Chapter 3, Brazil has developed in conjunction with patriarchal institutions, creating a hierarchically gendered, racialized and class-based society, in which poor, black and mixed-race women – the characteristics of many women in these areas – are the most discriminated against.

4.3.3 Location 3: Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG)

UCKG is Brazil's second biggest Pentecostal church after the Assembly of God (AD) with around 2 million followers (IBGE, 2010). Created in 1977 by the self-styled Bishop and later self-made billionaire Edir Macedo, UCKG differs from traditional Pentecostal churches due to its neo-Pentecostal focus on Prosperity Theology (Mariano, 1999). This is the belief that the faithful should be financially prosperous, healthy and happy in this world and includes the

concept of a contract with God: the greater the donations and sacrifice the follower makes, the greater the reward from God (ibid). Therefore, Prosperity Theology in general and UCKG in particular have often been mired in criticism and controversy, as the monthly tithe and regular donations followers are required to make have been said to merely enrich its pastors (Freston, 1994; Mariano, 1999; Almeida, 2009).

Project Rahab

Cristiane Cardoso created Project Rahab in 2011, aimed at women who have experienced some form of violence and at helping women get out of prostitution. Cardoso said that the project was created “to value and assist women who carry some kind of trauma and suffer marks of the past” (Godllywood, 2016). The name refers to the Biblical character Rahab from the Old Testament, a prostitute who helped the Israelites capture the city of Jericho. Her loyalty meant that she and her children were kept safe during the massacre and capture of the city and she later went on to marry a Hebrew, becoming part of the genealogy of David and hence, the genealogy of Jesus (Godllywood, 2016).

According to the Godllywood website, Project Rahab volunteers use Rahab as a symbol of an abused woman whose faith allowed her to believe in – and achieve – a better life. In honour of her, Rahab volunteers wear a red ribbon around their necks. It was the same symbol used by Rahab outside her window so that the Hebrew soldiers would know not to kill her when they entered the city of Jericho. It is also said that the ribbon tied outside a window during that time was the sign of a house of prostitution. Project Rahab volunteers use the symbol to affirm that “through audacious faith [such as Rahab’s], any abuse or degradation a woman suffers can be completely removed and cured” (Godllywood, 2016). Since its creation and due

to UCKG's international reach, the project has expanded worldwide and is now present and growing in several countries, such as South Africa, Portugal and the UK. In Brazil, Project Rahab meetings are held in at least 40 central UCKG temples across 22 Brazilian states (Godllywood, 2016). In addition, where possible, the project appears to be increasing its links with state services to women, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 6.

Project Rahab meetings take place in the Solomon Temple (*Templo Salomão*), in the city centre area of *Brás*. During the day, it is a very popular area for shopping, as it is a place with many factories and warehouses, especially textile manufacturing. Therefore, the products, mainly clothes and trinkets, sold in market stalls, are relatively cheap. It is also very close to the city centre's infamous area known as *Crack-o-landia* (crack-land), a place with a high concentration of drug addicts and homeless people. As those coming to *Brás* usually come with money to spend, pickpocketing, stealing and muggings are rife (as I discovered personally). The two largest Pentecostal churches, AD and UCKG, have set up headquarters in *Brás*, likely due to the high numbers of drug addicts in the area, as the Churches run programs for overcoming drug addiction and many of the people in the area are their target audience.

The Solomon Temple is the largest space for religious worship in Brazil, with space for 10,000 worshipers, and was built at a cost of R\$680 million (approx. US\$216 million today), begun in 2010 and finished in 2014 (Batista Jr, 2014). It was inspired by the Solomon Temple, the first temple cited in the Bible, which used to be in Jerusalem, until it was destroyed in 586 A.D. Researchers have pointed out that UCKG appears to create links between the Church and Jewish symbols, perhaps in order to give the Church (only founded in 1977) greater

legitimacy (Gutierrez, 2011). Bishop Macedo, has become a billionaire businessman, owner of several television channels and a well-known TV station *Rede Record*. UCKG runs various internet websites, a weekly newspaper '*Folha Universal*' and several magazines. It also has its own music label, *Line Records*, which specializes in gospel music, and has its own publishing company, *Unipro*, which publishes UCKG's books mainly written by Macedo and other prominent bishops. UCKG holds more television rights than the *Globo Group*, Brazil's biggest media network (Almeida, 2009). Macedo has become a celebrity in Brazil and thousands flocked to the Temple's opening, including then-President Dilma Rousseff, and vice-President Michel Temer, as well as many other dignitaries (Batista Jr, 2014). I attended Project Rahab meetings as well as other women's meetings I was invited to, such as *Women's Moment* (*Momento Mulher*) and *Love Therapy* (*Terapia do Amor*), in addition to regular, church services. I give greater detail about these meetings and further background information on UCKG and Project Rahab in Chapter 6.

Maps and Photos of Locations

Below are two maps which show the layout and division into sub-prefectures of the city of São Paulo. Figure 7 shows the names of the areas where I conducted research: the small green area 'Centro' is where I lived on the border with 'Oeste' and the Solomon Temple was located in the division between 'Centro' and 'Sudeste'. Figure 7 also shows the dark blue area of 'Leste 2' where the *Women's Collective* is located and the *Women's Family Alliance* is located in the large green area 'Sul'. Figure 8 gives slightly greater detail with the location names, for example *Brás* can be seen in area 25, on the border with area 9. Area 28 is where the *Women's Collective* is located, and area 18 is where the *Women's Family Alliance* is found. In addition, figures 9 and 10 are from the area in the South Zone near the *Women's Family Alliance* and

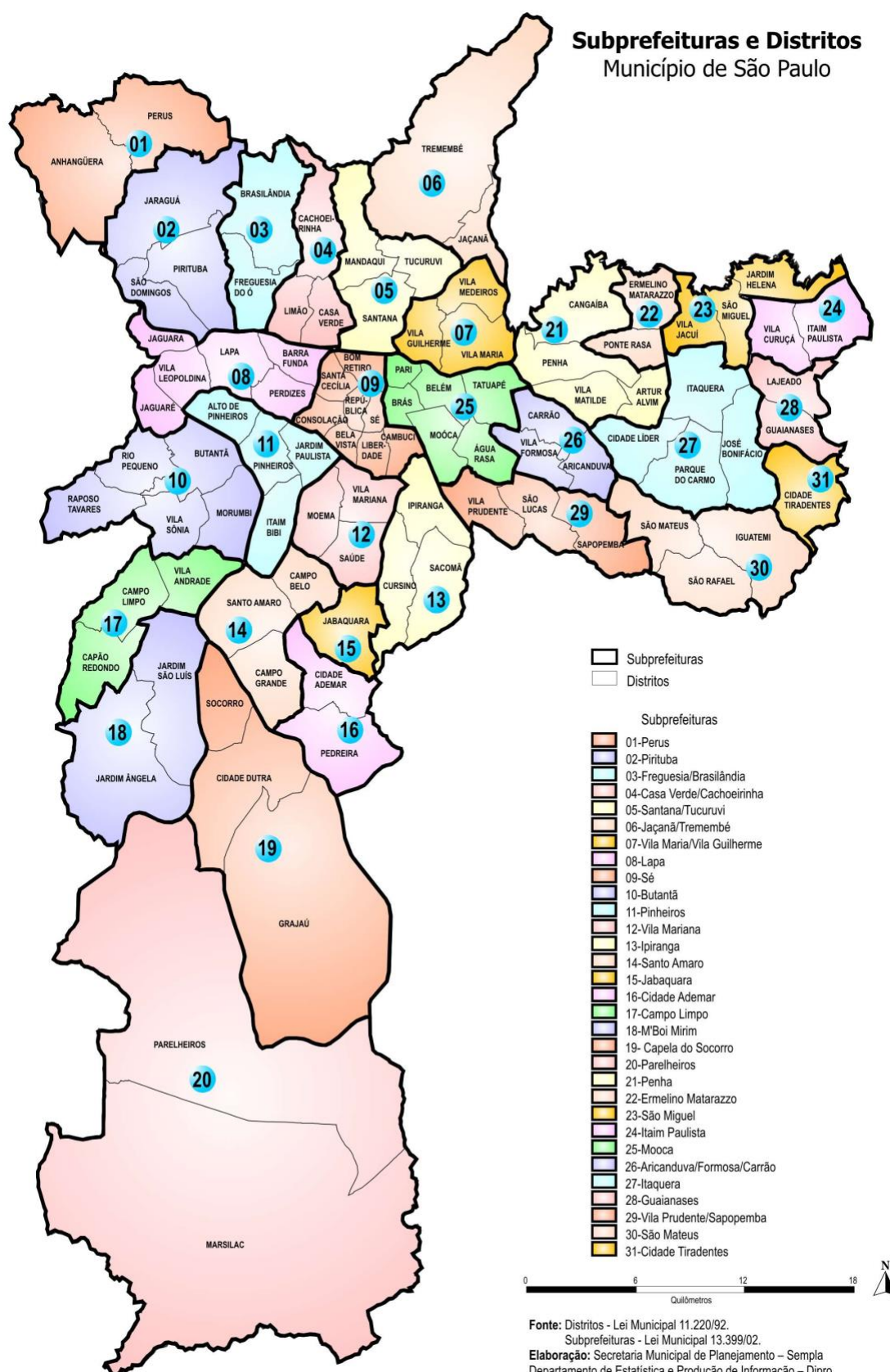
figures 11 and 12 are pictures of the Solomon Temple. Although I do not have pictures of the East Zone area near the *Women's Collective*, it is very similar to figures 9 and 10.

Figure 7 Map of São Paulo Sub-Prefectures



Source: Secretaria Municipal Planejamento Urbano (SEMPLA) Planos Urbanos, available from: http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/urbanismo/dados_estatisticos/

Figure 8 Map of São Paulo Sub-Prefectures and Districts



Source: Secretaria Municipal Planejamento Urbano (SEMPA) Planos Urbanos, Available from: http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/urbanismo/dados_estatisticos/

Figure 9 Housing in the South Zone



Source: By Marianne Ortelli (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], Permission via Wikimedia Commons, 15th June 2015

Figure 10 Favela in the South Zone



By Marianne Ortelli (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], Permission via Wikimedia Commons, 15th June 2015

Figure 11 UCKG Solomon Temple, Brás, São Paulo



Source: By Ferf10 (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)], Permission via Wikimedia Commons, 1st September 2014

Figure 12 UCKG Solomon Temple, Brás, São Paulo



Source: By Vitor Mazuco (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)], Permission via Wikimedia Commons, 4th January 2015

4.4 Data Collection Methods

This section describes the methods used in data collection for both primary and secondary data sources. The nature of the research lent itself to a qualitative approach based on an interpretive position because I was interested in exploring the ways in which participants understood and experienced certain aspects of the world around them (Marsh & Keating, 2006). This meant that the methods of data collection needed be flexible in order to allow me the ability to respond to the context in which the research was taking place (Marsh & Keating, 2006). I therefore chose to use certain ethnographic methods including participant observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis in the form of leaflets, memos, flyers, books and all kinds of literature gained from the study locations. This approach is highly conducive to a feminist post-structuralist analysis of data, due to the epistemological parallels with third-wave feminist theory (Baxter, 2003). This includes the favouring of detailed descriptions of concrete life experiences within a particular culture and the social rules and patterns that constitute it and a rejection of positivist, universal laws (Baxter, 2003). This section explains these choices, including data logging, reflexivity and considerations on the method, particularly from a gendered perspective.

4.4.1 Participant Observation and In-depth Interviews

The study drew on participant observation, an important tool for studying how people manage and interpret their everyday lives. Participant observation was an especially important tool for listening to group therapy sessions in the CDCM centres, as women discussed issues pertaining to violence, gender and religion, as well as during the sessions at Project Rahab and sermons at UCKG, where similar topics were discussed. Participant

observation is an on-going process which allows researchers to witness the ‘reflexive rationalisation’ of conduct, that is, “the continual interpretation and application of new knowledge by people (including themselves) in their social environments” (May, 2011: 170).

I also conducted in-depth interviews (n = 32) with female survivors of IPV, centre professionals and church volunteers, as well as religious female activists and feminist activists, including lawyers, social workers, psychologists and state employees (see Figure 13 below). The interviews include 12 in-depth interviews with abused women and service users within the 2 CDCMs. Across the three centres I conducted 18 interviews with ‘staff’: this includes 6 social workers, 4 psychologists, 2 managers (one from each CDCM), 2 admin staff, 1 lawyer and 3 Project Rahab leaders. I also interviewed 2 judges who worked in Domestic Violence courts. I spoke to hundreds of people at meetings, events, in private and in public about violence against women (n = 200) building up a picture of different facets of the issues pertaining to VAW in Brazil. There was often crossover between those who worked in domestic violence centres or violence activists and campaigners, and those who had experienced domestic violence themselves. I did not have the opportunity to interview men, as the CDCM centres and Project Rahab were run by women and for women. In addition, both Church and feminist mobilisations were heavily female dominated. However, for the project at hand, which aimed to uncover *women’s* experiences and understandings of violence and gender, the interviewing of men was not necessary.

Figure 13 Table of Interviews

Centre	Service Users	Staff
Family Alliance	5 x service users	2 x social workers 2 x psychologists 1 x manager 1 x admin staff (Total 6)
Women's Collective	7 x service users	2 x social workers 1 x psychologist 1 x manager 1 x admin staff 1 x lawyer (total 6)
Project Rahab (PR)	**I was unable to conduct in-depth interviews with women attending Project Rahab due to restrictions discussed in this chapter.	1 x psychologist (UCKG member and PR volunteer) 2 x social workers (UCKG members and PR volunteers) 3 x Project Rahab leaders (UCKG members and PR volunteers) (Total 6)
Other		2 x Judges from specialised Domestic Violence Courts (Total 2)
	Total Service Users: 12	Total Staff/Professionals: 20
Total Interviews		32

The interviews with service users were relatively unstructured: I asked them to tell me about their experience at the centre, and what they felt they had learned which had helped them

in their specific situation. I paid particular attention when they talked about themes relating to religion/faith, gender/womanhood/femininity, and violence. Part of my reasoning for this method is discussed in the next section, in the considerations on the method and the interviews. The interviews with professional and managerial staff/leaders were semi-structured in that I asked them specifically about the ways in which religion/faith arose in the centres and how it was addressed and I asked about concepts of gender and violence. Overall, however, I felt that I gained better information through listening during participant observation than through official interviews, where the formality of the situation appeared to make some interviewees more timid and less talkative, and themes relating to gender, religion and violence often arose in everyday conversation.

Data Logging

Generally, I made notes in a notebook while attending the CDCM centres and Project Rahab. Every day I reflected on and wrote down my experiences, what I had seen and heard and how I felt. This is because while reflexivity on the part of the researcher is paramount, so too is a commitment to the “data logging process” (May, 2011: 177) such as field notes on observations. Time must be spent familiarising oneself with the social setting and the people within it and issues of validity and quality in qualitative research can be addressed through ‘subjective adequacy’ (Severyn Bruyn, 1966 in May, 2011). This concept includes as much *time* spent in the field as possible for the project, careful note of the *physical environment* and attention to *social circumstances*, e.g. if possible, varied opportunities for the observer to relate to the group in terms of status, role and activities. Subjective adequacy also includes *language* awareness which is not just verbal but also facial expressions and bodily gestures and *intimacy* or personal involvement with the group and its members. Finally, Bruyn notes

that *social consensus* or exposure, over time to culture, allows the researcher to understand in what conditions and what settings meanings are conveyed (May, 2011: 179). During my study, these categories were taken into account and used during the fieldwork in order to enhance my notes, observations and reflexive thought. Where possible, if agreement from the whole group was obtained, I also recorded group session conversations.

4.4.2 Considerations on the Method

The feminist post-structuralist perspective of small-scale and localized transformation does make generalisations and transferable explanations within research difficult (Baxter, 2003). Therefore, it could be argued that the study carried out in this research is difficult to replicate as other *Women's Defence and Community Centres (CDCMs)* have different people working in them and/or a different ethos. However, linking knowledge uncovered from this study to the wider world is not impossible, as "local meanings of talk work within, represent and reconstitute broader discursive structures, relations and processes" (Baxter, 2003:18). Echoing this, Eckert and McConnell Ginet (1999) suggested that analysis of contextualized interactions necessarily draw on intertextualised generalisations and broad social explanation, which can produce powerful resonances and rich insights about the intricacies and complexities of human relations (Eckert & McConnell Ginet, 1999 in Baxter, 2003:18). While I do not know for sure that other centres have similar outlooks and impacts on women, it is very likely, as Catholic, Pentecostal, feminist and secular discourses appear to be highly vocal voices addressing issues of gender and VAW.

In addition, historian Joan Scott (1991) argues that experience is always discursively structured – that what a person sees and understands is always shaped by what one already

knows and can articulate, creating a series of debates about the relation of experience and language, therefore closely linked to feminist post-structuralism (Scott, 1991 in Baxter, 2003). Indeed, as DeVault and Gross (2007) point out, a critical approach to informant accounts does not have to be a dismissive or “debunking” (2007: 184) approach. They suggest that:

The strongest feminist research brings along with that idea a complementary awareness that researchers are always working with accounts constructed linguistically, that experience recounted is always emergent in the moment, that telling requires a listener and that the listening shapes the account as well as the telling, that both telling and listening are shaped by discursive histories (so that fragments of many other tellings are carried in any embodied conversation), and so on... (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 184).

Therefore, *active* listening, where the listener interrogates their deep-seated assumptions about various worlds, becomes a very important aspect of research. For this reason, participant observation during sessions was just as important, if not more so, than the interviews themselves. In addition, talking to the women on numerous occasions allowed me to analyse what was said during interview and what was said in less ‘formal’ circumstances. This was very helpful as many of the women were less comfortable and clearly more conscious of their words during ‘formal’ interviews.

Reflexivity

According to Kelly (1988), feminist practice involves the rejection of hierarchy and pays attention to issues of power relations, highlighting the researcher’s role in the process of data gathering. Researchers must therefore be attentive to the fact that they are in a position of

authority, representing powerful academic institutions and that their own presence can affect what they are seeing and what they are being told (Marsh & Keating, 2006). This conscious awareness of the power relation between participants and researcher has led feminist researchers to uphold the need for 'reflexivity' in their research, "a process whereby researchers recognise, examine, and understand how their social background, location and assumptions affect their research practice" (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 16). This means that the researcher takes part in a continual process of critical thinking, by documenting their own views and experiences throughout the research.

Pillow and Mayo (2007) also argue that the attention to and concern about relationships with subjects, in particular issues of reciprocity, representation and voice, are uniquely feminist. In this study, I was acutely aware of my presence and women's reactions to it. The majority of women I spoke to were black and mixed race, from low-income backgrounds. My white skin, fair hair and evident middle-class status was at once a barrier and a point of connection. Many of the women had never had contact with a foreigner and therefore my presence elicited curiosity: upon explaining my project, women either were or were not willing to talk to me. I kept a diary during my fieldwork and spent a lot of time initially just getting to know people, offering help where needed and being friendly. This allowed people time to get to know me and feel more comfortable in my presence.

However, when a researcher interviews there is a power imbalance: the social status of the researcher and the participant is often different and the researcher must be aware that she represents a powerful university institution (Secor, 2010). In the interviewing of women, Riessman (1987) points out that sometimes a shared gender status is not enough, especially

if the interviewer and informant are positioned differently with respect to race, gender, ability, sexuality, or age. Informants can feel that the interviewer does not care about them or can misunderstand them and as Riessman (1987) suggests, it is wise to remember that research participants no doubt make assumptions about the interviewer too.

Oakley (1981) argued that distanced objectivity in social research and the pretence of neutrality was in conflict with the principles of feminism. Oakley felt that rather than women being viewed as informants, researchers “should develop ways of conceptualising the interview as an encounter between women with common interests, who would share knowledge” (1981: 54). In addition, according to DeVault and Gross (2007) a feminist researcher must be reflexive about research relations, “which are never simple encounters, innocent of identities and lines of power, but, rather, are always embedded in and shaped by cultural constructions of similarity, difference and significance” (2007: 184). In order to limit power imbalances, my respondents were therefore treated as experts whose knowledge was valued. This is discussed in greater depth below.

Finally, Kaufman (2007) points out that for feminist empirical researchers, studying women who embrace and advocate for patriarchal religious traditions can present several interrelated problems. Conducting research on groups whose identity politics are very different from our own can be a real challenge and yet one of the priorities of feminist practice is giving voice to women and making their lived experiences visible, even when we do not share their politics (ibid). In order to deal with this difficulty, Kaufman believes that all empirical work needs a multidisciplinary perspective, taking into account specific political, historical and sociological contexts. Kaufman states, “If we do not differentiate by time, place,

and politics, we end up disguising rather than explaining the effects of the structure of patriarchy on religious discourses about gender relations or how religious rituals are used in everyday life” (2007: 685). Therefore, it is important to use a feminist approach that uncovers the historical and political processes which are part of culturally dominant norms of femininity, which in turn are central components of cultural identity (Kaufman, 2007). This further supports the use of a feminist post-structuralist epistemology and methodology.

Interviews and Research Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was sought and obtained from my university institution, King’s College London; the project was deemed ‘high-risk’ due to location of the centres and the personal nature of the information involved, which included discussions around faith, violence and religion. Due to the highly personal nature of conversations, I did not seek to question the women too deeply over the violence they had experienced as I did not want to bring up painful memories. I focused much more on what the women felt they had learned at the centres they attended, elements they remembered, changes in their lives linked to the centres and I explored their links with religion.

I stressed the women’s anonymity in written work, the fact that they could withdraw at any time while I was doing the fieldwork, and every step was taken to maximise their comfort during interviewing. This included times that suited them, although I chose to only conduct interviews in the centres themselves and did not go to the interviewee’s homes. This was because I did not feel that I could guarantee my or my interviewee’s safety. Being low-income and favela areas, issues of access were complicated by the presence of drug gangs and little policing. In addition, the women’s homes were not necessarily spaces of safety, as the women

were generally experienced IPV or domestic violence perpetrated by a family member. I had to consider that my presence might place the women in greater danger by angering family members. Following Oakley's definition of viewing informants as an encounter between women with common interests, I offered up personal information as to my own life and experiences of violence, allowing interviewees to see my own vulnerabilities and to learn about life in a different culture and context. In this way, I aimed to make the exchange more similar to women sharing knowledge and I tried to make the 'interview' more similar to a conversation, allowing the women to talk to me about things they deemed important.

I provided information sheets for expert participants and service users, as well as consent forms. However, I did point out to the ethics committee at King's College London that issues can emerge over the need to sign forms in Brazil. There is a strong culture and concern surrounding official documentation, which means that suspicions arise when people (especially those less affluent, socially marginalised or with limited power or means) are asked to sign (see Holston 2008). The existence of numerous notary offices (by public/private partnership) in every district, which endorse signatures, demonstrates the particular, bureaucratic context of Brazil. In order to address this, the ethics committee accepted my proposal to read out the consent form to each participant and gain their consent verbally without requiring a signature. While being aware that formal consent is required by every participant, I believe written forms could, in some cases, jeopardise the research project. Therefore, I obtained a signature only where participants were happy to do so.

Positionality

As I discussed above, an aspect of reflexivity is that of positionality. Rather than a view from nowhere, feminist researchers pay attention to their own agendas, from the selection of the research problem to their choice of method and analysis and interpretation of findings (Hesse-Biber, 2007). According to Baxter, post-structuralism specifically addresses the “fictionalizing process” (2003:6) of an act of research and therefore includes analysis of the authorial choices and textual strategies. Post-structuralism focuses on the importance of self-reflexivity, in order to make explicit the relationships between “what is being analysed” and “how it is being analysed” (ibid).

Taking into account the importance of positionality and reflexivity in the research process, I feel that I must disclose my own experience living with a Brazilian partner in São Paulo (2007-2010). I experienced substantial conflict in my relationship, mainly over gendered expectations of my behaviour ‘as a woman’ and was presented with forms of femininity I had not had to ‘perform’ in the U.K. For example, there was an insistence on what was deemed ‘feminine behaviour’ which included things such as not swearing, not drinking, not laughing too loudly, not being too talkative and generally being ‘soft’ and ‘demure’. Despite attempts to modify my behaviour, I became increasingly unhappy in the relationship as the changes were never enough and my ex-partner’s behaviour was very controlling. I began to experience the growing symptoms of psychological abuse which arose through comments, then arguments and later verbal and physical threats, as well as control over my bodily movements, appearance, and the possibility of seeing friends or family.

My actions, spoken words and thoughts were all closely scrutinised. In Brazil, this type of behaviour and assertion of control over a person is associated with high levels of jealousy, called *ciumes doentio*, roughly translated as someone sick with jealousy. I am neither suggesting that this experience of IPV occurred *because* my partner was Brazilian or that this was a typical experience of someone romantically involved with a Brazilian. However, this experience informs my positionality because it allows for a certain degree of understanding as to the experience and effects of psychological abuse as well as personal knowledge of how some forms of IPV can be negotiated. It led to my interest in the ways women in Brazil negotiated negative stereotypes of feminism and the role of religion in their lives, especially from a gendered perspective. I was keen to understand how other women in Brazil dealt with ideals of femininity and masculinity which I found oppressive, and their experience of negotiating a strongly patriarchal and masculinist culture. Adhering to feminist practice based on my own positionality, I believe the reader must be made aware of this experience as it informs my knowledge and opinions.

In addition, this experience of living in Brazil for almost 3 years prior to the research and the fluency I developed in Portuguese add a unique lens of analysis to the study as well as an added element of cultural intuition and knowledge. However, I was also vividly aware of my position as a white, middle-class, European researcher, interviewing women at great social and economic disadvantage, who also suffered racial discrimination. Many of the women had experienced levels of abuse and violence far beyond anything I could imagine. Finally, I should add that I identify as a feminist myself, and have no particular religious affiliation. I grew up in the Church of England where I stayed until I was a teenager and began to question Christian teachings related to gender roles and relations. I also often attended Catholic services as my

grandmother was a fervent Catholic. I do not identify as either atheist or agnostic as I have a strong sense of spirituality, but I have remained personally dissatisfied with the theological offerings from Christian churches.

Therefore, consistent with feminist practice, I do not believe in an objective view ‘from nowhere’. All researchers have gendered, racial and class-based experiences which inform their positionality, their research and the way they analyse data, whether they are conscious of it or not. I accept that my conclusions from this study are linked to my own subjective experiences. However, I have remained consistent with feminist post-structuralism, which has allowed me to write this thesis with the explicit feminist objective to uncover injustice and when, where and how women are oppressed. Moreover, I have consistently considered my authorial choices and textual strategies.

4.4.3 A Note on Location Choices, Justification and Limitations of the Project

My original intention was to find a centre in a more upscale area of São Paulo in order to include a class comparison and potential differences in discourses around violence and gender from a class-based perspective. However, upon visiting a centre in a middle-class area of São Paulo, I found that treatment options were individual and no group work was conducted at the centre, which limited my possibilities for interaction with the women. In addition, although the centre was in a more middle-class area, most the women still came from low-income, surrounding areas. I also discovered through discussions and interviews with various centre workers, that women with financial means rarely came to State-funded centres, preferring to visit psychologists in private clinics. The violence that middle-class women experience is therefore addressed as a health issue, rather than through a gendered

lens, as it is only in CDCMs that psychologists and social workers tend to specialise in gender issues. In addition, psychologists in private centres are not required to recommend their patient to file a police report, unlike the specialised centres under study. This suggests that levels of IPV are significantly under-reported among middle-class and elite women who are unlikely to go to the police or use specialised CDCM centres.

Spending a month in the city in February 2014 was invaluable as it allowed me to visit the centres and make contact with gatekeepers (centre managers and professionals). Upon explaining my project, I immediately identified strong differences in discourses around gender and violence in both the *Women's Collective* and the *Family Alliance*, as well as similarities in their creation from CEB-led women's mobilisation. I was intrigued by these similarities and differences and despite the challenges I discovered in reaching the centres (e.g. long commutes), I knew they would make ideal locations for my research project. For this reason, I resolved to live in the city centre which was a midway point between all centres.

While conducting my scouting trip, I heard about the Pentecostal project Rahab (*Projeto Raabe*). I did not seek formal permission from UCKG to conduct research, as I had been warned that they rarely gave official permission. I began attending the sessions and informally explained my project to the female leaders. The Project Rahab organisers were happy for me to attend the project and talk to me in interview on condition of anonymity. I think my presence as a *gringa* (foreigner) was intriguing and I was regularly pointed out as an interesting potential new convert. This was similar to the CDCMS in which I worked: I sought verbal permission from the centre managers to conduct interviews, but did not seek official, written permission from the larger NGO bodies of which they were a part. This is because

bureaucracy in Brazil can be long and complex, and I felt such permission was unnecessary if I already had the agreement of the centres managers/project leaders on the ground. Therefore, there is no difference in methods and methodology in the centres under study.

The Project Rahab leaders were less keen, however, for me to talk directly to the women attending Project Rahab and my difficulty in obtaining interviews with the Project Rahab service users was exacerbated by the time limitation at the Temple. This was because directly after the meetings, everyone joined the main congregation and the room was filled with thousands of people. I was unable to stay long after the services, as they often ended late and the area of *Brás* was known for being quite dangerous. This does mean that unlike the other 2 centres, I did not obtain interviews with abused women themselves. The impact of this means that my analysis of Project Rahab is arguably more ‘institutional’ rather than ‘agentic’. However, I found that interviews with the project leaders and participant observation in the groups with women who stood up to testify to their ‘transformation’ at Project Rahab, allowed me to gain a keen and until now, little examined understanding of the way in which the project organisers attempt to help and cure women in pain.

4.4.4 Spatial and Gendered Methodological Considerations for the Researcher

Commuting regularly across São Paulo, I discovered the difficulties many women face on their journeys to and from work. A poor transport system meant massively overcrowded trains, tubes and buses. Thousands of people heaved themselves onto overloaded wagons and buses, and scuffles regularly broke out, while the heat added to the discomfort. São Paulo has been described as a *City of walls* (Caldeira, 2000) in which violence and fear of violence have helped to legitimize strategies such as the creation of private enclaves of safety for the rich

and allowed for the growth of private security. Public spaces, on the other hand, have been transformed into spaces of fear, where the criminalised and marginalised poor are able to walk freely (ibid). It has also been suggested that fear of violent crime is linked to gender inequality, and that the attachment of fear women place on public places, as well as the precautions they take as a result, constitute a 'spatial expression of patriarchy' (Valentine, 1989: 385). This also reproduces traditional notions about women's roles and the 'places' which are considered appropriate for us to use.

In my case, daily travel between the walled spaces of the rich and the poor meant crossing boundaries, real and imagined, along gendered, racial and socio-economic lines. As a lone female researcher, I was forced to negotiate gendered expectations of behaviour and 'submit' to the spatial expression of patriarchy. Interviews with women about violence in the home together with the constant talk and worry of crime and urban violence meant that lines blurred between spaces perceived as 'safe' and those perceived as 'dangerous'. In addition, as Caldeira (2000) has suggested, the everyday narratives, conversations and jokes about crime and violence, whilst perhaps used to counteract fear and the experiences of being a victim of crime, simultaneously make fear circulate and proliferate. I took precautions for my safety, such as only interviewing in the centres, dressing appropriately and going home before dark. However, I also saw death and violence on the street: among several instances, a shot gang member bleeding on the pavement under a tarpaulin; an old, homeless man who had died inexplicably on the street and on many occasions, policemen pointing guns at the heads of young men lined up against the wall.

While research across many fields has focused on the gendered experiences of men and women living in high crime areas, only some academics have addressed the way this impacts the researchers themselves (e.g. Nordstrom and Robben, 1996). In my study, I argue that it was the gendered implications of *fear* of crime and violence that acted as the major constraints on my spatial behaviour and methodological choices during my fieldwork. After being mugged I took taxis where possible, and I was nervous of being out alone after dark. I could perhaps have got more interviews if I had gone to participant's homes, but I did not feel safe. This was perhaps a limitation on the number of interviews I was able to conduct but I tried to be as flexible as possible with regards to interview times and dates, while sticking to the centres as interview locations. However, the gendered aspects of circulating in a city with high levels of crime and fear of violence, as well as the real and ideological segregation of private and public space, allowed me to gain a better understanding of my interviewees and 'local' women's socialization into fear and submission. Such personal experiences can therefore deepen the understanding researchers gain of their subjects' lives. In the next section, I address my methods for data analysis and verification.

4.5 Data Analysis, Coding and Data Verification

I transcribed all the interviews verbatim in Portuguese and created summaries of the texts in English. All quotes are my own translations. As I am still in contact with many of the interviewees, I was often able to contact them via Skype and social media in order to clarify any doubts or ambiguities. I coded and grouped together the interview information under themes such as 'gender', 'religion', 'violence', putting interview extracts in different columns

and allowing me to see similarities or differences in data, as well as overlapping ideas. This allowed me to look more clearly at information emerging from across all the centres studied.

Interviewing both professionals and service users allowed an added element of triangulation, data verification and a deeper understanding of different perspectives for a greater overall view of the discourses available and their effects. In addition, for triangulation purposes, I supplemented my primary data with institutional surveys and statistical data. Finally, in Chapters 7 and 8 I analyse the centres under study with the use of Foucault's concept of pastoral power, which I believe adds a richer and deeper quality of analysis.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the choice of a feminist post-structuralist theoretical framework for this study, consistent with the study's focus on religion, gender and violence, through the examination of issues of power, discourses in circulation in the centres and women's subjectivity. I adopted a qualitative approach with methods including participant observation and in-depth interviews. In keeping with a feminist methodology, I paid particular attention to my positionality and was reflexive in my thinking and note-taking during fieldwork. Analysis of the data was conducted through transcripts and coding data under themes. Triangulation included discussing issues of gender, VAW and religion with everyone I could talk to while in Brazil, gaining input from professionals, specialists, religious and/or feminist activists, and users of the services from the centres under study. In addition, verbal data was backed up with secondary data in the form of a revision of institutional surveys and statistical data.

Finally, a detailed description of São Paulo and the organisations under study allowed me to highlight some of the difficulties of the research, such as travel to the centres and the influence of crime. I argued that stories of violence and crime fuelled my fear of circulating in São Paulo, exacerbated by the gendered aspect of being a lone, female researcher and experiencing the spatial expression of patriarchy. This fear impacted my methodological decisions and therefore the study, although it also allowed me to develop a greater understanding of the processes of socialisation into fear and submission than many of the women I interviewed in São Paulo experience.

The relatively uncommon choice of conducting interviews with both staff/leaders and service users means that I try to examine the role of religion in differentiating understandings of gender and therefore violence from both an agentic position (that of the service users) and a more institutional position (that of the professionals who can be considered State actors). While the professionals may not always embody patriarchal state values, their position as State employees does place them in the position of actors on behalf of the State and therefore as spokespeople for State interests. In addition, my inability to interview service users at Project Rahab does mean that some chapters have a more agentic focus, and some chapters have a more institutional focus – I defend, however, my argument that this is an interesting tension to explore.

The next chapter (5) is the first of my data chapters, which examine the discourses of gender and violence, and the relations of care, power and subjectivity in the centres under study. Chapter 5 focuses in-depth on the case of the *Women's Collective*, the feminist and ostensibly 'secular' centre based in the East Zone.

CHAPTER 5: NEGOTIATING CONSERVATIVE GENDER NORMS AND BECOMING FEMINIST AS A PERSONAL AND POLITICAL STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH VIOLENCE

5.1 Introduction

No, I don't believe in a God who demands human sacrifices. I don't believe in a God who lays waste to a woman's life in order to save a man's soul (Floria Aemelia in: *That Same Flower* by Jostein Gaarder, 1998).

This sentence hung in a frame on the wall, one of few decorations in an otherwise lack-lustre counselling room in the *Women's Collective*, a centre for abused women in one of São Paulo's low-income neighbourhoods. I later discovered it was from the book 'That Same Flower' by Jostein Gaarder (1998), which he insists is a genuine reproduction of a personal letter composed for Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (4th Century), one of the Latin Fathers of the Christian Church and a famous figure of Western philosophy, written by his former lover Floria Aemilia. Floria was his concubine for over a decade in Africa and Italy and they had a child, but Augustine banished Floria, intending to move on to a socially advantageous marriage. In the end he didn't marry, and chose instead a path of religious asceticism, renouncing all earthly pleasures, hoping to gain eternal life in Heaven. This sentence crystallised Floria's response to her humiliation and rejection, pointing out the hypocrisy of the redemptive

power of abstinence, which entailed ruining a woman's life in order for a man to reach Heaven. If the letter (entitled Codex Floriae) really is a legitimate transcription of an original medieval document then this is probably one of the earliest recorded questionings by a woman of the Church's early views towards the position of women in society (Gaborro, 1998). Floria has nothing but contempt for Augustine's faith in a deity that - in her view - places the existential and spiritual worth of a man over a woman's (ibid). Why, I wondered, was this sentence hanging in a counselling room in a centre for abused women?

Edna, the psychologist at the *Women's Collective*, admitted that she used it as a discursive technique in her work with the women who attended the centre. "It really shocks some women when they see it, they read it and keep staring at it". Edna explained that when faith arose as a factor that affected a woman's ability to understand or even to begin thinking about the violence she confronted, and the potential for change, she asked them to read or think about this sentence and its implications. Edna felt that the Christian faith was "a double-edged sword" because it "acted directly in people's lives, either motivating them to do something or achieve something, or by potentially acting very punitively in their lives":

Religion [Christianity] ends up being very patriarchal, it's quite sexist you know, the man is the head of the family, the boss. This legitimises the process of female submission, where the man is in charge, he makes the decisions, he must be obeyed. And the idea that marriage is forever, that God has brought you together, it legitimises the woman's submissive position. Regardless of whether the relationship is violent or not, whether the relationship is satisfying, whether she is happy or submissive, her rights, choices and desires are limited (Edna, Psychologist, 20/03/2015).

Edna believed that religion indirectly legitimised violence against women. She explained that at the *Women's Collective*, she saw women whose faith in God allowed them to feel close to the Divine and to live with the hope or belief that something good would come of their lives. It was clearly a comforting factor which helped some women overcome loss and difficulties. On the other hand, Edna found that it often acted negatively in women's lives, particularly when it appeared as "absolute truth" and acted as a form of "punishment". Many feminists believe that VAW is sustained and rooted in the structure and thoughts of patriarchal religion (e.g. Daly, 1986; Juschka, 2001; Orozco 2009), although it should be acknowledged that VAW exists across the religious and secular divide. While belief does not cause abuse, it can contribute to an atmosphere where it is more easily tolerated (Lewy and Dull, 2005). These beliefs centre on the idea that God has designated men as dominant, with morally superior judgment, whereas women must be submissive (ibid). With the power of this moral authority comes implied permission for the husband to control his wife and punish her if she disobeys (Pagelow & Johnson, 1988). This also links into symbolic violence described by Bourdieu (2001, [1998]) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (2004) whereby the gender domination inscribed in Christian doctrine is naturalised and gender inequality is unrecognised and accepted without question, in a form of 'symbolic' violence.

Less often considered in the literature on IPV and religion, are the ways in which secular professionals and religious service users interact in order to address violence (for exceptions see Bradley, 2010; Lewy and Dull, 2005; Merry, 2001). In this chapter, I examine the way in which the *Women's Collective* helps abused women of faith overcome situations of violence and the effect this has on their sense of identity and subjectivity. Based on participant observation and in-depth interviews, I identify an explicit focus on addressing conservative

Christian-based norms of masculinity and femininity in the centre, which the staff perceive as detrimental in cases of IPV and strongly pious women. These women struggle with conflicting understandings of the violence they experience and solutions to it, linked to confusion over gender-based roles and relations. However, through the feminist strategies of consciousness-raising and the call to collective action in a safe and uniquely female 'sacred' space, women learn about their explicit right not to be hit (through the Maria da Penha Law) and the patriarchal institutions – religious and social – that maintain their subjugation.

I therefore argue that some of the abused women of faith attending the *Women's Collective* negotiate local gender norms by beginning to question restrictive and conservative gender norms and behavioural expectations, and develop the strategy of 'becoming feminist' in order to reduce some of the personal, collective and political forms of violence they experience. Furthermore, interviews with women of faith and ostensibly 'secular' professionals at the centre reveal the fascinating realisation for both staff and service users that it is not actually religion per se which is the problem, but rather the patriarchal way in which it is interpreted and used to control women. Feminist re-readings of Bible passages and re-interpretations of scripture allow women a chance to explore and maintain their faith while releasing them from patriarchal gender-based teachings around women's roles which stymie their ability to deal with male domestic violence.

The chapter is set out as follows: Section 5.2 explains the background of the *Women's Collective* and the characteristics of the service users. In Section 5.3 I look at the way in which conservative gender ideology is changed and influenced by feminism in the centre, leading some women of faith to identify as feminists as a tool for reducing the violence in their lives.

This is linked in particular through the development of a language of rights. I then look at the ways in which ostensibly ‘secular’ professionals and women of faith interact (Section 5.4), and the effect this interaction has on both groups in relation to their understanding and negotiation of violence. Finally, in Section 5.5, I provide concluding remarks.

5.2 The Women’s Collective

5.2.1 Characteristics of the Service Users

According to data supplied by the centre for 2010 to 2013, the women attending the centre ranged in age from 18 to 60+, although the greatest number of women attending in all years were aged 30-39, followed by those aged 18 to 29, then 40-49, with a considerable drop occurring in numbers of women seeking help for abuse aged 50-59 and 60+.

Over the same period, in almost 80 percent of cases, the perpetrator was the woman’s live-in partner, and ex-partner in 7 percent of cases. This then fell to son or daughter in 3 per cent of cases, and friend or neighbour (2 per cent), aunt or uncle (2 per cent), parent or boyfriend (2 per cent), cousin (2 per cent) and parent-in-law or son/daughter in-law in 2 per cent of cases²⁶. This is consistent with world data on IPV which show that female victims of IPV are predominantly of child-bearing age and that the partner or ex-partner is the most common perpetrator (RHR & WHO, 2013).

²⁶ In the data supplied, the centre did not differentiate relatives perpetrating abuse by gender.

In addition, 19 per cent of women had experienced violence for between 2-5 years. This was closely followed by 18 percent of women who had experienced violence for 5-10 years and 18 per cent of women for 10-20 years, then 16 percent who had experienced violence for 1-2 years, 12 percent for less than 1 year, and 6 percent had been living with violence for over 20 years. This is demonstrated in Figure 14 below:

Figure 14 Length of Time of Violence Experienced

Period of violence	Percentage of women
Less than 1 year	12
Between 1 and 2 years	16
Between 2 and 5 years	19
Between 5 and 10 years	18
Between 10 and 20 years	18
Over 20 years	6
Not Declared	11

Source: Statistics Supplied by the Women's Collective, Table created by Author

Consistent with studies on IPV (e.g. Heise et al. 1999), the figures show that the highest percentages of women defer seeking help and live with violence for several years before addressing it formally.

Finally, the data supplied revealed that over the period examined, almost 60 per cent of women reported the violence to the police, 36 per cent did not, and the information was not available in 4 per cent of cases. The rates of reporting violence to the police suggest that

Brazil's policies to address IPV, including female staffed police stations and the Maria da Penha Law, seem to be encouraging women to report abuse²⁷.

The Difficulty in Perceiving Abuse

Women arrive at the centre through word of mouth, via referral from health services or from the police. Ana, the centre manager, explained that most women arriving at the centre did not fully understand the situation of violence they were in. "They come saying their husband hit them, but when you begin to get the full story, you can see that they have suffered psychological violence for a long time". The Brazilian legal definition of domestic violence includes physical and sexual violence, as well as verbal and psychological abuse, using threats and defamation to a person's character. This is a broad definition encompassing numerous forms of violence (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017). The women's difficulty in perceiving the violence perpetrated against them is linked to research highlighted in Chapter 2 which has demonstrated that women tend to see 'violence' as what happens between men (occurring in 'public spaces'), while IPV is often not understood as violence. Cultural attitudes minimise violence occurring in private spaces (Hume, 2008) and gender inequality renders the violence invisible, silencing women's victimisation and allowing for widespread tolerance of the problem (Craske, 1999; Hume, 2008).

Edna, the psychologist, supported Ana's remarks by explaining: "To an extent, they know that if they are being hit, it's wrong, but they don't understand the full context and don't usually

²⁷ Rates for reporting violence to the police are lower at the *Family Alliance*, I examine this more closely in Chapter 6.

know that they have rights.” According to the staff, generally the women did not want to separate from their partners, they just wanted to improve their situation. Edna told me: “If there was some kind of magic which could eliminate the pain and anxiety, they would go home and continue living in the same situation of violence.” While this could sound a little disparaging towards abused women, Edna’s comment also underscores women’s tolerance for abuse which has been ‘normalised’ by society and moreover points to the difficulty of leaving an abusive partner. Ana explained that many women at the centre were financially dependent on their partners, and many had not worked for a number of years, because they were the main caretakers of the family. This exemplifies the patriarchal, Christian-influenced culture of Brazil in which women are expected to be responsible for the family and the private sphere of the home, while men go out to work and are the breadwinners. Women therefore suffer structural violence from the patriarchal organisation of State and society which makes women responsible for the family but tends to exacerbate their financial dependence on a male partner. For poor women with little income, mouths to feed, and sometimes few support networks, leaving an abusive partner was harder than for a woman with greater financial resources, as the structural, moral and affective economic impediments can appear insurmountable.

For Ana and her staff, the priority was to help the woman understand the situation of violence in which she found herself, following which she could learn strategies to help defend herself and decide what to do about her situation:

We explain the risks to them if they stay [in the relationship]. Sometimes it’s clear that their partner is a very dangerous person, the type of person who will carry out the threats he makes. But many

women don't feel strong enough to get away, there are numerous factors to take into consideration and it's their choice what they want to do... Deep down the woman knows best. So, we help her to think and reflect, to learn what her options are and to develop strategies to improve the violent situation she is in (Ana, Centre Manager 13/11/2014).

However, the staff believed that physical violence was often a sign of the end of the relationship: "So many things need to be rebuilt and in the case of physical violence these things are almost impossible to rebuild," said Ana.

5.2.2 Feminism at the *Women's Collective*

Feminism resists singular definition, but includes liberal (e.g. Eisenstein, 1993), radical (e.g. Echols, 1989), Marxist (e.g. Vogel, 2014), womanist (e.g. Phillips, 2006), postmodern (e.g. Butler, 1990), and postcolonial (e.g. Mohanty, 1988) perspectives, among others (Marine & Lewis, 2014). In addition, "feminism has specific, distinct histories in different locations and has not travelled a linear path from the West to the rest of the world" (McGuire et al., 2010:100). In Brazil, as in many countries, the word 'feminist' inspires ideas of man-hating and a lack of traditional norms of 'femininity'. Identifying as feminist, particularly in São Paulo's low-income peripheral neighbourhoods which are conservative in relation to ideas of gender roles and relations, requires courage and often elicits negative responses.

Feminist Staff

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the Brazilian State is strongly patriarchal and institutionally this manifests itself through the lack of specific training in women's issues. According to Ana, very little attention is given to gender roles and gender relations in university courses for social

workers, and within CDCMs Ana argued that conflict arises between social work's main focus of restoring family relations versus abused women's needs. All the staff identified as feminist and viewed VAW as linked to patriarchy and women's unequal position in society. However, Ana pointed out that a feminist stance within a State-funded CNDM was uncommon in Brazil, because it depended on the team running the centre:

It's very important that the professionals who work here have a good understanding of gender, violence and gendered relations and don't have too much of a 'family' vision. The family focus is complicated: social work is about the family and reinstituting family values. There is no training specifically for women's issues so we teach ourselves and we have to be careful not to become family mediators (Ana, Centre Manager, 13/11/2014).

Marcia, one of the social workers, explained that being a feminist social worker was difficult, as the concept was generally negatively perceived:

Other social workers have a different vision. When you tell them you're a feminist people already look at you differently, thinking, "here she comes creating problems, problematizing the woman question". It happens everywhere, so wherever I go I immediately tell people I'm a feminist so that people know what I'm about and how I'm going to do things. It's a daily battle this issue of the 'woman question' in social work, we have contact with other social workers who aren't clear on this issue, who don't understand. To be honest, they're the majority, even though it's fundamental (Marcia, Social Worker, 17/04/2015).

The overtly feminist outlook found in the *Women's Collective* was therefore clearly at odds with some other CDCMs. Comments from the staff highlight that social work in Brazil prioritises keeping families together, which sometimes clashes with a feminist focus which

priorities the needs of the abused woman. This is because focusing on the family sometimes limits the help women receive, and women can even be encouraged to remain in violent a relationship for the sake of the children. Moreover, the CDCM can end up becoming a family mediator, but a feminist perspective sees mediation with an abuser as almost impossible, given the structural inequality within the family (e.g. Westlund, 1999). The issue of family needs vs abused women's needs links into the fundamental controversy in Brazil over women's roles in society and contested understandings of gender roles and relations and this will be addressed more comprehensively in Chapter 6. Ana and Marcia's testimonies suggest that centres with a feminist perspective on VAW are likely to be in the minority across the country, meaning that patriarchal values focusing on the family (i.e. children) rather than the abused woman are inherent within State institutions and often embodied by State actors (e.g. social workers) working in centres for abused women.

Teaching Intersectional Feminism and a Language of Rights

At the *Women's Collective*, I found that the staff took an intersectional²⁸ approach to feminism, addressing class and race in conjunction with gender, issues that were significant in this low-income, predominantly black and mixed race neighbourhood. The women were introduced to intersectional feminist theories through stories of feminist women of colour from across the Americas, including Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), Patricia Collins (1948-), bell hooks (1952-), Angela Davis (1944-), Gloria Anzaldua (1944-2004) and Sueli Carneiro (1950-)²⁹. These feminists served as role models and strategic actors in raising the abused women's

²⁸ see Kimberlé Crenshaw 1996

²⁹ Sojourner Truth is considered to be one of the first, black, female activists in the US, most famous for her speech *Ain't I a Woman?* (1863); Patricia Collins' work primarily concerns issues involving

feminist consciousness. The histories of black and indigenous women in the US and Latin America allowed the women to make connections with their stories of oppression. The women discussed the stigma they felt when they told people they lived in the *Zona Leste*, with its infamy as a place of poverty, violence, drugs and crime. The women learned about feminism as a fight for rights and gender equality, linked to race and class. This links to broader feminist discussions across Latin America, which has a shared history of violent colonisation, slavery and the destruction of indigenous groups (see Chapter 3).

Activism at the Women's Collective

The staff held events, such as the monthly Lilac Tea forum, where guests were invited to come and discuss social problems that affected the area. In addition, the centre had a weekly 'Social Group' which was created as the staff realised that many women were experiencing similar problems and asking similar questions. These problems were closely linked to matters of health and the lack of doctors in the local health centres, the lack of crèches, and difficulties accessing welfare benefits (e.g. *bolsa família*³⁰). Many of the issues were therefore related to areas of public policy that were failing the women:

feminism and gender within the African-American community (see e.g. 1990); bell hooks is an American author, feminist, and social activist famous for writing on the intersectionality of race, capitalism, and gender, and what she describes as their ability to produce and perpetuate systems of oppression and class domination (see e.g. 1981, 1984). Angela Davis is a black, feminist American professor, famous for being part of the Black Panther organisation in the 70s, and defending social and racial discrimination (see e.g. 1971, 1983). Sueli Carneiro is considered to be one of Brazil's foremost black, feminist, academics (see e.g. 1985, 2011) ; Gloria Anzaldúa was an American theorist famous for her work on feminist, Chicana and queer theory (see e.g. 1981, 1987).

³⁰ *Bolsa Família* is the Brazilian government's social welfare program.

We thought we'd transform it into a group and make it a collective discussion so that the women could recognise each other and understand that this violation of rights is not just happening to one woman, there is the collective violation of rights. And from this, organising together in order to confront public power to get what's owed to them. Confront the State and demand that action be taken (Marcia, Social Worker, 17/04/2014).

The Lilac Tea and Social Group are examples of spaces in which women were encouraged to understand the overlapping forms of violence they experienced as not simply personal, but also political, and they were encouraged to confront the State by demanding their rights through collective activism. These were therefore consciousness-raising spaces where both women's practical and strategic needs (Molyneux, 1985) were aired, and where women were encouraged to examine the subjugation they experienced from the patriarchal organisations and institutions to which they were linked. This shows that the centre's aim was clearly feminist and activist as it had strategic, political and social aims.

5.3 The Influence of Conservative Evangelical Protestantism on Gender-Based Norms of Behaviour

5.3.1 The influence of Pentecostalism in low-income areas

Religion is also a significant part of life in the *Zona Leste*. While Catholicism is strong across the country, urban peripheries have the highest number of Pentecostal churches (Vilhena, 2011) and conversion rates to Pentecostalism among women are high (Mariz and Machado, 1997; Vilhena, 2011). As discussed in Chapter 2, this is because in low-income areas Pentecostal conversion is sometimes used as a strategy for reducing exposure to violence, especially violence occurring in public (Goldstein, 2003) and a strategy for dealing with

poverty (Mariz and Machado, 1997; Rostas and Droogers, 1993; Smilde, 2007; Stoll, 1990). In fact, Pentecostal Churches appear to have strong influence in violent, peripheral neighbourhoods such as the *Zona Leste* where the *Women's Collective* is located, because they are the few institutions to represent a symbolic alternative to pervasive violence and crime. Interestingly, most of the women I interviewed at the centre identified as Pentecostal. It is also important to note that Brazilian Pentecostalism in low-income areas tends to be rather conservative, with specific codes of dress (e.g. suits for men and long, modest dresses for women) and expectations of behaviour (e.g. no drinking or listening to non-religious music) for both men and women.

According to the centre staff and participant observation, the theme of gendered behaviour linked to locally, culturally and religiously imposed norms often surfaced as an important factor in spaces such as the Lilac Tea. Ana described the Lilac Tea as, “a space for gathering strength, of empowerment and respect for the rights of women”. She said: “the Lilac Tea is a space for an alternative education because formal education oppresses women, it’s a moment for looking up, not for submission.” This kind of emotive language “looking up” and “submission” is interesting because of its religious overtones and it seemed clear to me that Ana used such language in order to provoke the women. Vera, a regular service user in her 40s responded:

You watch television and it seems like all they do is kill women... People have to change, don't they? How much longer can this carry on? We don't want to be submissive, to bend our heads and say Amen to everything, because we're equal. Even before being women, we are human, with the same desires, the same desire to fight... the same

desire to win... we're human too, not just women (Vera, Service User, 17/04/2014).

Vera's quote underscores the tension some of the women clearly felt in relation to gender-based norms that encouraged female submission to men, and ultimately could lead to the legitimization of VAW. Many Brazilian Pentecostal churches tend to emphasize female submission to their male partners, and Vera's frustration with such conservative, religiously-based gender norms was palpable. However, this comment also demonstrates the way in which discussions around IPV, human rights and women's rights at the centre allowed her to express these frustrations and link some of the gender-based inequalities and injustices to the institutions around her, including conservative, patriarchal Churches.

Such frustrations were echoed by other women at the centre. For example, 38 year-old Lourdes, a Pentecostal woman who had been coming to the centre for three years due to physical and mental abuse at the hands of her husband, said:

In Church the pastor's wife tells us we have to look after our husbands, even when they want something... you know... physical [sex] and we don't. She says we have to do that even when we don't want to, because it's women's role to serve men and that's what we were born to do. I used to believe that until I began to understand our rights, and today I don't believe that anymore (Lourdes, Service User, 30/04/2015).

Research has demonstrated that pastors' wives have considerable influence in churches and communities (Birman, 2007). Within Pentecostal churches women often turn to pastors' wives for help and advice. However, this case – unlikely to be unique – exemplifies the extent

to which patriarchal and unequal teachings on gender roles and relations are emphasized and reaffirmed by women themselves, even reinforcing concepts such as a 'woman's duty' to serve men and provide sexual relations for her husband. Teachings such as these are even more detrimental for women who experience IPV and yet are taught that they must serve and even (sexually) pleasure their abuser. This highlights how gendered, self-regulating behaviour is encouraged in the home through patriarchal teachings heard in Church – regardless of whether such ideas are religiously mandated or not.

Estefania, a Pentecostal from the popular *Assembly of God Church*, who had also attended the centre for several years due to IPV from her husband, explained how conservative Pentecostal beliefs around gender and sexuality had affected her perception of others outside the home, as well as her behaviour towards her husband inside the home, until she learned new ideas based on the feminist teachings at the *Women's Collective*:

I love the Lilac Tea: we learn so much, about illness, about issues... mainly about women, that's what we talk about most. Before some of us had prejudices against certain people, like homosexuals, but here we learn that everyone should be treated equally. Even though I'm Evangelical, now I accept the person as they are. Before I thought the idea of homosexuality was disgusting, but now I've changed. I'm embarrassed (Estefania, Service User, 30/04/2015).

Estefania explained how her beliefs around gendered norms of behaviour and gendered identities (and sexualities) were linked to conservative Pentecostal norms she had learned in church, but her perception of these changed the longer she spent at the *Women's Collective*. Estefania said she still attended church because her faith in God had not changed. However, she said she now felt indignant when she heard something full of prejudice in church itself.

Estefania explained how her concept of gender roles and relations had changed since attending the centre:

This idea that women have to be submissive to them [men], they really latch on it. "I am the boss in this house... I'm in control... I say..." I don't agree with that. Oh, my gosh I've changed so much! I was brought up in the Church, all I knew was that I had to bow my head, I had to cry and accept it silently but not today! Now I think, why are you saying that? Why do I have to do that? I don't accept that (Estefania, Service User, 30/04/2015).

Estefania's discourse shows how a patriarchal, conservative gender-based discourse focusing on the concept of a well-behaved, obedient and silent woman is reinforced in some churches, which led her to believe that she had to accept what her husband said or did, even when it hurt her, because he was the male authority. Estefania explains her change of attitude:

Here, I learned how to deal with the aggressor. That's important, how to defend oneself verbally... physical aggression... you have to make him realise that he has to respect the woman and respect himself and there has to be dialogue. He has to learn that we weren't born to be men's servants, like his mother, that the chores have to be divided, that we have to be equal. Not like in church where they say the man is the head of the family! He's not the head of the family, we're side by side, I want to speak too and I want to be listened to (Estefania, Service User, 30/04/2015).

Estefania appears to have learned techniques to deal with verbal and physical aggression at the centre and she has consequently grown in confidence. She recognises unequal teachings around gendered norms taught within her church, and explains that these affected her private life as they influenced her behaviour within her relationship.

Juliana: Identifying as a Lesbian

Juliana, a 30-year-old woman who had attended the centre for about a year, explained how she had begun to question and resist conservative Pentecostal and patriarchal hierarchies not just around gender roles and relations, but also around sexuality. A *crente*³¹ from the Northeast, Juliana used to sing in church and dress modestly in long skirts as many Pentecostal women do. In São Paulo, she suffered a shockingly brutal rape, where she was left for dead. Due to depression and physical ailments following the trauma, she eventually found her way to the *Women's Collective*. It took months for her to open up to the staff, where she revealed that she had suffered sexual abuse from family members in her youth and had regularly tried to stop her father from beating and even killing her mother. She had turned to a Pentecostal church as a place of solace and for many years it had been important for her. For this reason, when she first attended the *Women's Collective*, she had great difficulty with the conversations being had in the centre around gender and sexuality:

I was angry at first, I didn't want to know about some things. I saw a film on gender and sexuality... I was so angry I said to them that when the Lilac Tea was on gender, they better not invite me! The film was about a boy who realised he liked boys and the family was Pentecostal and thought he had to be cured until he killed himself because he couldn't cope with the pressure. I was disgusted, and then the mother realised that people were gay, they were born that way and that they had got it all wrong and that angered me because I saw myself in her. I knew I thought those things were wrong. To be honest, I just didn't want to admit that those things were inside me (Juliana, Service User, 22/5/2015).

³¹ colloquial term for Pentecostals.

Juliana says that she held similar prejudices towards homosexuals as Estefania, based on conservative Pentecostal teachings around sexuality in which homosexuality is believed to be a sin. However, Juliana was also hinting that she herself had repressed sexual desires for women that she had not wanted to admit to. When I met Juliana, she was beginning to identify as a lesbian. She felt conflicted about her religion and she had stopped going to church:

I'm not Pentecostal anymore, it began to get harder and harder for me, I had this feeling inside and it was no longer a place where I felt good. So, I left the Church, I don't even listen to prayers, to songs, I listen to regular music now, to Rock and other things, before I never listened to that, we weren't allowed... It's so complicated how I feel about the Church now. Sometimes I think that everything that I believed was wrong, I'm often confused. I converted [to Pentecostalism] because I could see that at that time, for the person that I was... I didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't go out... so the Church was the best place for me.... Now I'm disappointed by the people from the Church, they turned on me because I left. I feel that I was valued for what I did and not for who I am, especially if they discover [about being a lesbian] ... I realised my value lay in singing and prayer, but not as a person, as a human being (Juliana, Service User 22/5/2015).

The conservative Pentecostal views on gender roles and sexuality are very restrictive for men and women who identify as LGBTI, as this goes against conservative Christian theology which links sexuality to biology. While richer areas of São Paulo are a little more liberal, the peripheral such as the *Zona Leste* tend to be more conservative, which makes identifying as gay even harder in these areas. Juliana's testimony highlights adherence to strict Pentecostal norms, for example she did not listen to Rock or mainstream music, which is not allowed in some Pentecostal churches. In addition, she notes that her church was the right place for her

because she did not like going out, drinking or socialising in public places. This supports evidence that religious spaces are seen as alternatives to other social spaces, notably public spaces which are linked to problems of crime and violence. However, attending the *Women's Collective* had led to profound behavioural changes in Juliana, as she began rejecting strict Pentecostal gender norms and transgressed rules by listening to music and questioning conservative, patriarchal, sexual norms. Living in the *Zona Leste*, however, her new-found sexual identity was not going to be an easy path, due to the area's conservatism.

5.3.2 Becoming Feminist as a Defensive Strategy to Minimise Violence

I noted earlier the forms of race and class based international, regional and local feminist thought to which the women were exposed in the centre. Here, I demonstrate the ways in which the women of faith I interviewed understood feminism, and how the concept of 'becoming feminist' helped the women negotiate and improve the violence they experienced. Miris, for example, pointed to the way she saw feminism as a fight for everyone, not just the rights of women:

We're trying to improve our daily lives, we're not looking to improve things just for ourselves, as women. We don't want to be better than them [men]. We're fighting for a cause that is everyone's. I heard we got 8 days of paternity leave. Women fought for that and men got that through women, so I think that's what feminism is maybe. I still don't understand properly, that's why I'm here, trying to understand, but I think it's that. It's a fight. We're fighting for everybody, for the whole collective (Miris, Service User, 17/04/2015).

Estefania also explained her understanding of feminism:

For me, feminism is fighting for my rights, to be able to do what I want and be where I want without prejudice... I want to be able to make the most of my rights without hurting others, as a woman, as a Black woman, without prejudice. It's in health, in politics, it's in everything (Estefania, Service User, 30/04/2015).

Estefania identifies feminism as a fight for rights, linked to race and its relevance across difference spheres, both personal and political. She also explains how the concept of rights – especially the Maria da Penha Law³² - led to change in her relationship and helped to reduce the IPV she experienced:

One day I said to him: “Either you change, or we have a problem. I said it very clearly and explained that if it wasn't good for him then he could leave. Thank God, he changed. He was never particularly aggressive, I think it's because he's chemically dependent on drugs and that sometimes makes him 'macho', so one day I told him I wouldn't accept it anymore. Now it's better, I wouldn't say it's perfect but we're managing to live together ok and it's so helpful to know there is somewhere that supports us. It's a bit intimidating for him, knowing there are lawyers and social workers and psychologists on my side, he gets annoyed when he thinks about the Maria da Penha Law (Estefania, Service User, 30/04/2015).

A similar story was echoed by Lourdes:

My husband hates that I come here and he hates the women who work here, he says they're all feminists, but he's too scared to forbid me to come because now we know the law is on my side. He says, “this bloody Maria da Penha, it's like she's in my house...” Before, I didn't trust the police because once I went to report him but he has

³² See Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation

friends there and instead they put me in a cell and beat me like a dog. But now I know my rights and I know the girls from the *Women's Collective* will support me. They are feminist and today I'm feminist just like they are. I don't accept everything the way I did before (Lourdes, Service User, 30/04/2015).

From Lourdes' testimony, it is possible to see that for many men, calling someone a feminist is a curse word and a negative term. But Lourdes and Estefania have also managed to reduce the IPV they experienced, because both now understand that the Maria da Penha law criminalises domestic violence and that their partners are not allowed to harm them. Lourdes is more confident about going to the police, because she is more assertive about her rights and knows that she has support. It would appear that their increased confidence, especially in relation to knowledge about their rights, left their partners feeling more intimidated about their own use of violence, meaning that violence in the home was reduced. The women are therefore able to resist IPV individually and as part of a collective group at the centre. Lourdes described her trajectory at the *Women's Collective* like this:

First, they explain that there's that psychological aggression, right? The kind that humiliates and where you're mistreated. Well, they say we should never allow ourselves to be humiliated and that we need to find a job, that we can do it, that we can achieve our dreams. At the *Women's Collective*, I didn't do this but many of the girls got study scholarships, and then there's the handicrafts, where you can earn money, I do that too, I make dolls and many things (Lourdes, Service User, 30/04/2015).

Juliana had also grown in confidence, which changed her behaviour towards violence not only in private, but also in public:

Yes, I'd say I'm a feminist. Today I'm different, if I have to die, I would die fighting. For example, there was this guy staring at me on the metro and I had enough and I slapped him. He went bright red and got off the metro. The old Juliana would never have dared to do that, but I'm much stronger and that strength I found at the *Women's Collective* (Juliana, Service User, 22/5/2015).

Juliana's growth and change at the centre allowed her to make changes in public and in private, which contradicted the normative, gender-based expectations of meek and quiet female behaviour she had previously been taught in the Pentecostal Church. She finally felt able to stand up to the kind of patriarchal, normative violence in society which allows men to treat women like sex objects (e.g. by staring at them), making women feel uncomfortable but forcing them to accept such behaviour which is considered the 'norm'. However, it should also be acknowledged that slapping the man on the metro is also a form of physical violence itself.

The testimonies highlight the strength the women gained through the support of a female-oriented space, which gave some women the courage to make changes in their relationships, linked to the support network at the *Women's Collective*. The focus on rights and women's understanding of the Maria da Penha Law worked as a strategy to reduce male IPV, especially as partners felt intimidated once the women understood the law. Merry (2001) argued that the creation of laws against domestic violence have allowed women to see themselves as subjects with rights. This concept is simultaneously strengthened by criminalising batterers, thus conferring a greater understanding of rights to the victim (ibid). It is clear that in this case, the Maria da Penha law has helped women to understand that they have the right not to be hit and to see themselves as subjects with rights. Therefore, the women's development

of feminist identity is directly linked to the Maria da Penha law and a rights-based discourse of women's right not to be hit. Furthermore, feminist ideals have helped some of the women change the previous attitudes they had towards normative, gender-based roles and sexuality, giving the women more strength to make changes in their lives. This demonstrates Burke's empowerment approach (2012), suggesting that religious doctrine and practice has been re-interpreted by these women in ways that make them feel empowered in their daily lives. In the next section, I explore the discursive interaction between 'secular', feminist professionals, and women of faith at the *Women's Collective*.

5.4 Interactions Between Secular Staff and Abused Women of Faith

5.4.1 Pentecostal Women and Violence

Highlighted in Chapter 2, many strongly pious women have views that clash with feminist views on femininity, such as the role of the dutiful wife to pray for a husband who has lost his way, the importance of female submission to her husband or the belief that their experience is God's will. Nason-Clark (1997) and Lewy and Dull (2005) argue that religious victims of IPV sometimes have difficulty receiving adequate assistance because secular professionals have little understanding of the importance of a victim's religious belief and may attribute it in part to their religion. In addition, secular caregivers believe that some religious beliefs reinforce passivity and are detrimental to effectively confronting abuse. This view was supported by the staff at the *Women's Collective*, who argued that women of faith were often powerless to disentangle themselves from a marriage which they believed to be ordained by God. The story below – one of many – exemplifies such a case, and I use it to highlight the alternative

ways the secular professionals found to interact with women whose conservative Christian faith was strong.

Examples of Abused Women and Faith - The Case of Adriana

According to Adriana, the abuse she experienced from her husband began with small prohibitions, which she would accept in order to appease him, such as no longer listening to music in the home or singing. But the prohibitions grew, and she felt forced to accept more and more until finally it meant that she was not allowed to leave the house and visit her family. The wake-up call came when he beat her severely and she realised that she was in danger:

My husband is a local policeman (*Guarda Municipal*). He's a very serious man, he doesn't like to socialise, to go out, visit family. He doesn't let me see my family. One day, it was Christmas, I told him that I was going to see my family and he could stay home alone. That's when he hit me, grabbed me by the hair, threw me on the floor and beat me. He said that I couldn't go. I became very scared of him, so one day I went to a friend's house and I'm still there, a year later. Every time I go back he threatens me, I'm too scared to stay. But I can't separate from him, he's the man I chose to marry. My choice was blessed by God, and when we were dating Jesus revealed to me that he was the man of my life and I believe that God chose him for me. I can't leave him (Adriana, Service User, 17/04/2014).

Adriana said she did not feel capable of denouncing her husband to the police, taking legal action against him or even divorcing him, because, in her words, God had chosen him as a husband for her. His position of dominance was also reinforced by his status as an official, male representative of the State, (a local policeman), which made it even harder to denounce

his abusive and controlling behaviour. A committed Pentecostal, Adriana said she had discussed the situation with her pastor:

They [the pastor and pastor's wife] believe that he is lost. He used to go to Church, he had good standing in the Church but then he began to not want to socialise with people, in any social space with the family or the Church. And he didn't want me to go either. The pastor went to see him, told him to come back to Church, that Jesus would bless him, they prayed together. But so far it hasn't worked. The pastor has told me I must pray and that if I pray hard enough God will give me the answers (Adriana, Service User, 17/04/2014).

In Adriana's case, her husband remained impervious to the influence of the Church or the pastor, and chose to ignore them. But Adriana is told to pray, and that *if she prays hard enough* she will be given the answers she needs. This echoes Menjívar (2011) who found that women experiencing violence were told to pray, endure and be patient, but that this resulted in the normalisation of feelings of responsibility and culpability about their situation and led to the normalisation of the suffering they experienced.

Adriana's situation highlights the role of pastors (and pastor's wives) in couple's intimate lives. Nason-Clark (1997) argues that training pastors and priests in domestic violence could be an important resource in helping to reduce violence. This is supported by a study carried out by Kiss et al. (2012) in São Paulo which revealed that after the police, a priest/pastor was the second-most common (formal) person that women turn to in cases of domestic violence. Therefore, the advice of priests/pastors is crucial, but the core beliefs in Bible teachings are linked to gender prejudices embedded in conservative Christian teachings, which makes the help priests/pastors can give in cases of IPV controversial. It is true that the possibilities for

priest/pastor help will vary according to denomination, interpretation of script and even personal beliefs, but in Brazil's low-income suburbs, conservative Pentecostalism and the stricter form of Catholic Charismatic Renewal³³ are the norm, and appear to function as a form of patriarchal social control in both public and in private spaces.

5.4.2 Discursive Techniques

Having grown up in an Evangelical household, Edna, the psychologist, explained that she used religious language to 'communicate' with strongly religious women. Edna therefore used discursive techniques to get religious women thinking differently:

If a woman tells me that she must stay with her husband because Jesus chose him for her, then I say "ok, but right now you're suffering and you still want to stay with this man". The women always say, "but Jesus says we must stand firm, pray, that a woman is the column of the house, we need to watch over it and not give up". So, I say "well, that's a real sacrifice, can you see this sentence on the wall³⁴? Read this sentence to me". They read it and I ask them: "do you think that God demands the sacrifice you are making? Who do you think demands this, is it God? Is God happy? Do you think He's happy that you are being beaten up and forced to have sex when you don't want to, do you think that's really what God wants from you? Does He want you to bleed, with no teeth in your mouth because they've all been knocked out? (Edna, Psychologist, 05/12/2014).

Edna encouraged the women to question what God would want, which was a discursive technique that fitted with the women's personal and religious values:

³³ I discuss the growth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and its gendered impacts in Chapter 6.

³⁴ Referring to the sentence highlighted at the beginning of the chapter.

I say to them “from what you’re telling me about your religious belief, Jesus already made this sacrifice for you. He already paid the price for you, so why do you have to pay the price again? He suffered for you on the cross which was very hard for him. And he was the son of God! So why do you, a human being, a woman, think that you have to go through all of this? Have you asked yourself this?” (Edna, Psychologist 05/12/2014).

According to Edna, these questions were initially quite troubling to some women, but they allowed the women to begin questioning their suffering and whether the abuse they experienced was really mandated by God.

Rediscovering the ‘I’ and Re-Awakening Desire

Edna believed that teaching women gender equality and opening their eyes to patriarchal forms of control was important, because it could help to break down traditional gender stereotypes that contributed to women’s submission. She wanted women to find a voice, to regain their personality and autonomy. “Women need to be taken out of this position of saviour, provider and maintainer of the home and in a subjective sense, they need to place themselves in their own lives.” The staff felt that religious, abused women were so focused on the wellbeing and behaviour of the men in their lives, they forgot their own:

So many women spend their lives praying that he will change, and they are not living for themselves, for their own objectives. In Church, they don’t talk about women as the main authors of their own lives, who should try to achieve and conquer her desires as a subject herself. She is always talked about as the promoter of wellbeing, the one who will steer the man on the right course and give his life direction. She is submissive, she is there to live his life with him, but what about what she wants? It’s all about what is needed in his life, for him to get better

and improvement in his life merely means less suffering in her life (Edna, Psychologist, 05/12/2014).

Many of the abused women at the centre said they longer loving their husbands, due to the violence and threats. However, they also said that their faith kept them in the marriage, which is consistent with findings from Nason-Clark (1997) and Lewy and Dull (2005). It was not love or desire that kept Adriana wanting to continue a relationship with her husband, but rather the idea that God had brought them together and that as a virtuous woman, it was she who must save him. In Adriana's case, saving her husband meant bringing him back to God and to the Church through prayer, where their union could again be blessed and they could go back to the loving relationship they had before, when they were first together. According to Edna, that idea was largely a fantasy, as violence was extremely debilitating to a relationship and it was unlikely that things would 'return to normal':

She [Adriana] doesn't know what she wants, she hasn't thought about and admitted to her own desires for a long time. So once again she's waiting for God to act again in her life, to give her a sign and make something happen. Her way of acting and accepting, is related to her faith. She hasn't been the author of her own life, the author of her life is God, a masculine figure. And her husband is imbued with religious authority: he is a physical representation of this divine masculinity in the form of her husband, a man authorised and chosen by God. Therefore, she attributes all this symbolism to him: he represents all of God's divine qualities, divine power, God brought him into her life and prepared this man for her. All this symbolic weight is attached to her thought process. It's almost impossible for her to think separately, to think for herself, to try to understand what she wants, because she can't separate that from what she thinks God wants... and God chose this man for her. She can't look inside herself and admit to wanting something different than what God wants, because she can't separate her thoughts in that way. So, she doesn't understand herself, doesn't

know what she wants, what her desires are... (Edna, Psychologist 05/12/2014).

There are several aspects of interest here. There is clearly a tension between Edna's interpretation of Adriana, and Adriana's own understanding of herself – it is even possible to say that Edna portrays a patronizing account of Adriana, because she denies Adriana agency. As explained in Chapter 2, Mahmood (2005) has demonstrated that resistance does not only reside in resistance to patriarchy, but that it can also reside in piety and submission. Following Mahmood, it can therefore be argued that female self-sacrifice for the improvement of a partner or the family *is* agentic. On the other hand, Edna points to the importance of the weight of male, patriarchal religious symbolism: a male God, a male husband chosen by God, and the role of the submissive wife as a man's helper on his path in life. This represents the symbolic and normative violence explained in Chapter 2 which means that Adriana finds it hard to see that she deserves a life free from violence. Although Adriana has removed herself from the violence and control exerted by her husband, breaking with the violence through e.g. divorce does not fit with her religious values and means that she struggles with her relationship.

Edna's objective was to get abused women to understand their reasons for staying in an abusive relationship. Why did she want to continue with him? What did she feel for him? What kind of a husband did she want? She therefore wanted women to see themselves as subjects, to try to understand what they felt for their partner and to think about what they wanted for their own life. A keen student of Freud and Lacan, as well as someone who had felt pushed into an unhappy marriage herself and from whom she had since separated, Edna

claimed she was keen to re-awaken desire in the women, which had slowly been subsumed by their partner's wants and needs.

I try to help the women articulate their desires so that they actually begin to say "I want... I like... I would like...". This allows the women to perceive themselves, to see that they still exist and eventually it allows them to be more assertive in their relationships, they can begin to say, "I won't accept this anymore" or "I'm going to do this even if you don't like it (Edna, Psychologist, 05/12/2014).

According to Edna, the women initially failed to see the difference between happiness and personal realisation, saying they just wanted their partner to stop drinking, to stop hitting them or verbally abusing them. But, this merely represented a decrease of the woman's suffering:

Even if the man gets better, goes to Church, stops drinking, stops gambling, helps financially, even then, her own desires aren't being realised. All that has happened is that her pain is lessened. She continues in the relationship, not as a subject with hopes and dreams, but as an object that has kept the relationship alive. And to get this, to save him, she must sacrifice herself. She, as a being of value, disappears (Edna, Psychologist, 05/12/2014).

Self-sacrifice is something that is strongly stressed within certain forms of conservative Christianity (e.g. Daly, 1986; Juschka, 2001). Women sacrifice themselves as mothers for their children, or as loving partners who must pray for their partner's improvement. Edna believed that conservative Christian faith made it difficult to break with a violent relationship because religion "imposed itself as a superego in which the female ego was subsumed by the religious

ego". The woman was therefore diminished or excluded to a degree where she could no longer impose herself. This understanding of religion links into a Freudian analysis of religion as irrational and demonstrates Edna's own view towards religion. Edna explained to me that she had grown up in a Pentecostal household but that she herself struggled with it due to the patriarchal teachings and gender-based norms which promoted female submission to men. She was not an atheist, but had her own kind of spirituality, which links into Davie's concept of 'believing without belonging' (1990). Therefore, it is clear that Edna's own beliefs around religion, gender and violence inform the way she works with her patients.

While Edna worked on women's psychology and sense of subjectivity, Marcia, the social worker, explained that she had also developed similar techniques in her sessions.

5.4.3 Marcia: Re-interpreting Faith from a Feminist Perspective

Marcia admitted that she used to find it difficult to work with women whose faith was very strong. She grew up in the same neighbourhood and had taken part in youth activities in the Catholic Church. "They had a really cool angle at the time based on Liberation Theology. There was so much discussion on the fight against social inequality, the oppressed, but then that ended³⁵". Marcia left the Church and at university became part of the student welfare movement where she became an activist:

I radicalised a lot after I left the church, I began to have contact with other things, especially other theories that went against the question of religion. When I came to work here [the *Women's Collective*], I had to deal with a lot of Pentecostal women and Catholics, I've barely

³⁵ This is in reference to the demise of Liberation Theology (see Chapter 2).

dealt with any women who said “Hey, I’m from an African Spiritist community, from Umbanda or Candomblé. In fact, I don’t think I’ve dealt with any of them. The greatest number are those who have Christianity as a base (Marcia, Social Worker, 17/04/2015).

In similar terminology to Edna’s ‘double-edged sword,’ Marcia saw faith as both women’s “ally” and their “executioner”. She explained that during her sessions, religion often came up as an important reason why the women remained in violent relationships. Marcia felt that this was reinforced by priests, pastors and even churchgoers, who all reminded the women they had to have faith and they had to believe that things would change. According to Marcia, in some cases the pastors went as far as telling women that the violence was the women’s fault, believing it had to be linked to something the women were doing wrong (also supported by Nason-Clark, 1997). According to Marcia, this focus on women’s behaviour left them trapped in their situation and unable to make positive changes:

Whenever I’m doing a session, there are always some women who have a really strong faith and they say, “God is going to help me, the way things are, God will help me.” But you have to make her see that she needs to act on what’s happening, she needs to go beyond faith and act (Marcia, Social Worker, 17/04/2015).

Marcia was keen to find ways to connect with religious women because she believed that the centre had to work for *all* women experiencing violence, and not neglect those who had different beliefs than her own. Marcia’s difficulty was that the interventions and techniques she suggested to the women, such as separating physically for a time, often did not work for devout Christian women. Marcia explained that she found writings by Catholics for Choice (CFC) a Catholic pro-choice organisation, and a feminist pastor who “does a really cool analysis of religion and makes a great debate”. In the process, Marcia discovered that she herself had

perhaps been overly radical. Marcia explained that she had learned to be more tolerant because religious belief and practice were important in the lives of some women:

I began to search and read more, so that I could do sessions that would allow these women a discovery, along this process of religiosity. I realised that they don't need to break with religion because many of them submit to a situation of violence, but that they can, from the space they occupy, bring questions, bring contributions... to know that they are subjects of their own stories regardless of where they are, whether they are part of the Church, local community movements or with their family at home. It was a challenge and it still is, you know... It's still difficult, but over time I've developed more confidence to conduct these kinds of sessions (Marcia, Social Worker, 17/04/2015).

One of the techniques Marcia developed was reading the Bible with religious women and discussing the importance of interpretation. Marcia realised that in order to reach out to women of faith, like Edna, she needed to speak to them in *their* language. In discussing the Bible, she could offer feminist interpretations and deconstruct some of the interpretations that she argued legitimised VAW due to flawed, patriarchal readings of the Bible:

We read passages and from that you can deconstruct some of the things that are strongly related to interpretation of text. We read the *Virtuous Woman*, extracts from the Book of Esther and other bits that suggest putting oneself in the place of the subaltern. I help the women to see how the text is based on interpretation and that the so-called 'woman's position' is really an interpretation of where women are placed (Marcia, Social Worker, 17/04/2015).

Marcia recounted the case of Viviane, a devoutly Pentecostal woman severely abused by her husband, and how discussions on the passages Viviane brought in for reading led her to a new understanding. "She would reflect and say to me, "it's true, isn't it Marcia, look at how the

interpretation of the text is important!” and she even began to question her pastor about things in the text, saying to him “I don’t think it’s quite like that.” Although concerned about involving herself in someone else’s spirituality, Marcia felt she had found a way to continue conducting her social work in a language and context that women of faith women could relate to. This helped both Marcia and the abused women she worked with understand that spirituality, faith, and religious practice were not linked with violence in a relationship.

5.4.4 Emotional Change and Resistance Via the Body

In addition to psychological and social work, the *Women’s Collective* focused specifically on health by addressing the body, which they claimed was affected by rigid gender norms. The centre offered weekly exercise and dance classes, and the staff felt that a big difference could be seen in the women who came to these classes. According to Ana, physically and emotionally, many of the women were initially tense and reticent to talk or interact, but over time, as they joined in, this led to changes in their relationship with their body. “They become more open, physically and emotionally, they are able to connect with people. There is no judgment, no one will see them and tell them off. Even their dancing changes, their confidence grows” (Ana). The staff believed that although sometimes the women did not want to take part in the dancing, it was usually not because they did not like dancing, but because they had been forbidden by their husband or even by their conservative church. However, over time at the centre, this resistance gradually decreased. The women were encouraged to question why they would not take part: “Is it their church that says they can’t do it? is it their husband? Are they just self-censoring themselves? We try to get them to reconnect with themselves, to remember their desires, their passions” said Ana.

This was evident in the case of Valeria, a Pentecostal woman who had attended the centre for two years, and who admitted that she had experienced enormous changes within herself and her body. She was told by her doctor that she needed to do more exercise, but as a Pentecostal woman she only ever wore long skirts which inhibited her from sports. The staff suggested she wear trousers and trainers under her skirt, and this had allowed her to go out and do more exercise. In addition, Valeria had rediscovered a love of dancing which she did in secret:

You know, when I was younger I used to dance so much, I loved music and dancing. Well, then I became *Evangélica* (Pentecostal) and you know, we're not allowed to listen to *musica do mundo*³⁶ or dance. If anyone from my church saw me, I could be excluded. But here [the *Women's Collective*], I dance once a week! It's so wonderful, no one can see me, and I just let myself go! (Valeria, Service User, 30/11/2014).

This section has shown that through discursive techniques which break down patriarchal norms on gender roles and relations, as well as through physical techniques of exercise and dance, abused women of faith were slowly taught to resist patriarchal-cultural restrictive gender norms, influenced by conservative forms of Christianity. The discursive and physical techniques led to changes in women's self-regulating behaviour, and women were offered a 'safe', female-only space in which they were encouraged to transgress stereotypical norms of behaviour (e.g. by dancing) without being judged.

³⁶ The literal translation of this is "music of the world" which signifies non-religious music.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have brought to light new insights on the ways in which both abused women and professionals negotiate restrictive gender-based conservative Christian norms. For both Edna and Marcia, working with abused women of faith from within the Christian framework to which they adhered (in this case conservative Pentecostal and Charismatic Catholic), allowed for far better communication between so-called 'secular' professionals and women of faith. Discussions around some aspects of conservative Christian thought and developing an understanding that there are other ways of interpreting texts, allowed abused pious women to assess their position in a different light. The feminist focus of questioning the social construction of women's place in society led the abused women to a growing understanding of the different forms of gendered oppression they suffered. Women did not have to give up their faith by any means, but they began to identify when it was being used as a patriarchal method of control.

My research brings new knowledge to the literature on interactions between secular staff and abused women of faith, as the Brazilian example demonstrates that they can work together, but that an understanding of women's faith is necessary. This contradicts both Nason-Clark (1997) and Lewy and Dull (2005) who felt that secular assistance for women of faith was questionable. Both Edna and Marcia were familiar with the Christian context and belief systems within which the women were brought up. This shared understanding allowed the professionals and the abused women of faith to communicate with each other, in religious terms and language that were familiar to both parties. The staff *did* attribute the women's suffering in part to the women's religious faith, which they believed exacerbated women's

inability to act on their situation. But by focusing on examining questions of gender and patriarchy, both the staff and the abused women learned that it was not belief *per se* that was the problem, but instead the masculinist way in which the Bible was interpreted within certain churches.

The professionals also saw that faith brought strength and hope to many abused women and I demonstrated that the staff were not entirely secular in their own beliefs: they often had a personal level of spirituality but did not attend Catholic or Pentecostal churches due to the structural and symbolic violence they felt they experienced through patriarchal, gender-conservative ideology relating to gender and women's roles in society. The personal spirituality links into Grace Davie's concept of 'believing without belonging' (1990).

Through feminist consciousness-raising, abused women began to see a difference between their faith and the use of religion as a mechanism through which female submission and norms of sexuality were normalised in society. Moreover, bodily resistance to restrictive norms was encouraged through dance and exercise, which led to emotional change and a sense of empowerment in this safe, female-only space, where women could 'transgress' the patriarchal norms of behaviour imposed by their male partners and some churches.

Finally, I demonstrated that for abused women at this centre, becoming feminist became a strategy through which to reduce the violence which the women experienced. A solid grasp of the Maria da Penha Law and learning about women's rights, as well as racialised and class-based feminist discourses from across Latin America, gave some abused women the confidence to make personal changes in the home and collective change through activism.

Furthermore, identification with feminism to varying degrees encouraged women to make political demands on the State (e.g. activism to demand crèches) and gain a deeper understanding of the institutional and political structures which affect their gendered, everyday experiences. In the cases examined above, the identification with feminism and women's rights reduced the male partner's position of dominance as the men felt intimidated by both the legal and social support the women gained. The women were able to (re)gain some power and control within the relationship, which in conjunction with the discursive strategies the abused women were taught, meant that IPV was reduced.

Consistent with the staff's views that traditional education "oppresses" women, the Lilac Tea was a space for alternative education where low-income, abused women could learn about their history and feminism. In an area where educational levels are generally low, several women clearly felt empowered by the new-found knowledge they gained. Women were encouraged to find new spaces for themselves, in work or by studying, which meant that women embracing feminism becoming also began taking advantage of their new-found confidence in public as well as in private spheres.

In the next Chapter (6), I turn to the examination of another CDCM centre, the *Family Alliance*, located in a similar low-income, peripheral neighbourhood in the South Zone (*Zona Sul*). This centre is an FBO and I am interested in comparing the understandings of violence, gender and religion in these centres.

CHAPTER 6 VIOLENCE BEGINS AT HOME: A 'FAMILY PERSPECTIVE', THE VIOLENT MOTHER, AND MEDIATION AS A STRATEGY FOR VIOLENCE REDUCTION

6.1 Introduction

Do we only attend to female victims in this centre? No, women are aggressors too: women hit, women beat and women practice violence. Why is this? It's generational, they are reproducing what they too have experienced in the home (Lisa, Centre Manager, 3/3/2015).

This statement was made by the manager of the *Family Alliance*, an FBO incorporated into State social services as a CDCM which offers the identical 'tripod' of help available to battered women as the *Women's Collective* in Chapter 5. This includes psychological help, social welfare and legal advice to women living with violence, and the centre is in a similar low-income, high-crime suburb, this time in the South of São Paulo.

The *Family Alliance* is one of 11 social action projects developed by the local Liberation Theology-influenced Catholic Church³⁷. The centre is therefore a clear example of a faith-based NGO (i.e. FBO) which has become incorporated into the State welfare system, to provide social services to the public (Dagnino, 2005)³⁸. The FBO/State social services link brings up the debate argued by Beckford (2011), and Hjelm (2015) who caution against ‘religion as expedient’ – the use of faith-based services in the delivery of public services – particularly because of complexities around issues of gender relations and equality (Jeffreys, 2011)³⁹. However, Aune and Nyhagen (2015) argue that viewing ‘religion’ in such a monolithic way ignores the growth of FBOs in different historical, political and socio-economic contexts, as well as their work in relation to gender equality and women’s rights issues⁴⁰. This means that FBOs need to be unpacked and examined within their particular contexts and this chapter offers an in-depth look at an FBO providing a public service in Brazil.

For all intents and purposes, the help available at both the *Women’s Collective* and the *Family Alliance* and the solutions offered for dealing with violence should be the same. After all, the aim of both centres is to help women negotiate and improve the violence experienced in their lives. However, Lisa’s statement above on violence and the role of women as perpetrators of violence, as well as the faith-based background of the centre, suggest that the *Family Alliance* has a different perspective towards violence and gender relations than the feminist centre in

³⁷ This Church is one of the few in São Paulo which maintains a Liberation Theology perspective, influenced by the local priest, and is one of the main organisations attempting to address social problems in this deprived area.

³⁸ See chapters 1 and 2.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

the Eastern periphery. The *Women's Collective* in the *Zona Leste* viewed VAW as linked to patriarchy and the unequal position of women in society (see Chapter 5). Lisa's statement above suggests that the *Family Alliance* places greater emphasis on examining women's roles within abusive relationships.

In this Chapter, I demonstrate the ways in which a faith-based perspective within an NGO (FBO) offering welfare services does indeed impact the provision of women's rights, in this case because female violence towards children or partners is given equal weight to male violence due to the loss of a feminist perspective within a framework of so-called 'gender equality'. In addition, methods such as mediation between couples are introduced in response to legislation banning the mediation which was occurring in police stations and courts, where it was felt that domestic violence was being trivialised. I argue that FBOs and the State are therefore matrifocal, mediating women's identity and subjectivity through their normative roles as wives, mothers and carers of the family, demonstrating continuity rather than change in relation to women's position in society situation and making it difficult for abused women to extricate themselves from the situation of violence in which they find themselves.

The chapter is set out as follows: in Section 6.2 I provide the socio-historical context for the creation of the *Family Alliance* and I explore the faith perspective in the centre in order to examine how this influences understandings of gender and violence. Through the story of Sandra in Section 6.3, one of the service users, I examine the different forms of violence – e.g. domestic, urban and structural – that affect many women in this low-income, high crime suburb. This is because my interviews with the women at the centre highlighted different

forms of violence occurring in both private and public spaces, as well as structural forms of violence linked to poverty. I then address the use of couple mediation as a method for reducing IPV (Section 6.4) within the centre and I look at the 'family' perspective towards domestic violence in the centre, which is consistent with the centre's Catholic ethic as well as the aim of family restitution in social work in Brazil. In section 6.5 I examine the centre's strong focus on female violence and the mother's role in psychological abuse. These sections highlight the ways in which the gender and violence perspectives in the centre impact the women's ability to deal with violence. Finally, section 6.6 provides the chapter conclusion.

6.2 The Catholic Liberationist Faith Perspective at the Centre

6.2.1 From Crèche to CDCM

According to the staff, mostly locals, the *Family Alliance* had originally begun its days as a crèche in the late '90s, organised by volunteers from the local CEB-organised⁴¹ Catholic Church. Lisa, the centre manager, explained that the area was facing severe difficulties because factories had closed and left due to high taxes and many men were out of work. A large number of the unemployed men spent their time drinking in bars: "We had 5 bars for every 100 inhabitants, a ridiculously high number of bars and the unemployed men turned to drink and drugs". Women were forced to shoulder family and financial responsibilities. The crèche was formed so that children could be cared for while women worked, which highlights machismo and sexism in gender roles, as the unemployed men did not stay at home and look

⁴¹ CEBs are Ecclesiastical Base Communities, decentralised church groups which grew under Catholic Liberation Theology, see Chapter 2.

after the children, and this also links into the historically patriarchal formation of the Brazilian nation (see Chapter 3).

It was by running the crèche that the volunteers from the Church's women's group unintentionally began to discover the levels of IPV prevalent among local women. Child absences at the crèche led the volunteers to perform home visits, and Marina, a social worker, explained: "arriving at the homes, that's when they saw the signs: women hurt, black eyes, broken arms, hidden signs of violence". The crèche morphed into a centre for women, staffed by female volunteers from the Church. Then, in 2001, a contract was signed with the local council and funding was made available to run the centre with paid, professional staff, and the *Family Alliance* became part of State social services as a CDCM. Just as the staff at the *Women's Collective*, the social workers and psychologists at the centre are local women who have completed university training to work in the fields of social work and psychology. As locals, they are keenly aware of the difficulties faced by residents living in the area.

6.2.2 Faith Among Staff and Service Users

The staff made a point of explaining that the centre was "ecumenical" and therefore open to women of all faiths. "We might read the Gospel, or recite a prayer, but we don't hold services," said Lisa, keen to emphasise that Catholicism was not preached in the centre. As a State-sanctioned arm of the welfare system, a religious angle was not supposed to be present within one of the State's democratic (and ostensibly 'secular') institutions.

However, religious symbols abounded, from crosses above doors to small figures of the Virgin Mary in most rooms. Brazil is a country where less than 10 per cent of the population identify

as atheist, where the majority are Catholic (66 per cent) and where there is a growing Evangelical Protestant population (22 per cent), particularly in low-income, urban areas such as the *Zona Sul*, where, as described in Chapters 3 and 5, Evangelical conversion is sometimes viewed as a strategy for dealing with poverty, and physical and social insecurity (see Goldstein, 2003; Mariz and Machado, 1997; Rostas and Droogers, 1993; Smilde, 2007; Stoll, 1990 among others). In addition, patriarchal, racial and faith-based prejudice make admitting to following Afro-Spiritist religions such as *Umbanda* or *Candomblé* heavily frowned upon⁴². It is therefore very likely that the religious symbolism so strongly present in all the rooms was nothing out of the ordinary for the women who used the centre's services.

According to Carla, the administrative assistant, the country-wide statistics were reflected in the religious background of the service users, most of whom were Catholic (approx. 65 per cent), a sizeable number of whom were Pentecostal (approx. 30 per cent) and none of the women identified as either atheist or Spiritist. "They [the service users] tend to say they are non-practising Catholics, no one identifies as atheist," said Carla, underscoring the symbolic strength of faith in Brazil, where identifying as atheist is still considered quite shocking.

Despite the existence of religious symbols and prayers, the staff told me that religion was not of importance in the centre. They also felt that for most women at the centre, religion did not play an important role in their lives. For example, Monica, the psychologist, said that most of the women were not even particularly religious and that it was something the women rarely talked about during sessions: "most of them [abused women] don't bring religion into it". This

⁴² Many Evangelical Protestant churches such as UCKG have been accused of religious intolerance towards Afro-Spiritist religions (Vital & Lopes, 2013).

was in stark contrast to the staff at the *Women's Collective*, who claimed that religion was often something abused women brought up as a reason to stay with their husbands, regardless of the violence they experienced. Other staff members, however, agreed that there were links between Christianity and culture which affected women. Carla said:

Speaking of religion, I can see that in some cases, religion causes symbolic violence and gets in the way. The idea of "until death do us part" reinforces the idea of the family and means that the woman sometimes permits certain situations, because she's then scared that she won't be accepted socially, especially in Church. It's not only in Catholicism but in Evangelical churches too... The family is reinforced through that idea of matrimony lasting forever and that brings certain responsibilities for women and even for men also... (Carla, Administrative Assistant, 10/4/2015).

Similar to the testimony from the staff in the *Women's Collective* (Chapter 5), Carla points out the Catholic-cultural understandings of family and marriage in Brazil, whereby marriage is considered a sacred, indissoluble vow (see Chapter 3). The belief in the indissolubility of marriage and the sanctity of the family becomes complex in cases of IPV. Carla's thoughts were echoed by Monica, the psychologist, who explained:

Women here are raised to believe that marriage is forever. Once you get married, that marriage is for life. I mean, what is a woman who's separated worth? That's what they hear: separated women are worthless. So, they don't want to separate from their husbands and they want their children to have a father. To be respected in society, they must remain married. He can do whatever: hit her, beat her, but at least he's there. The presence of the man in home, that's still very strong (Monica, psychologist, 13/4/2015).

The presence of the male patriarch in the home, even if violent, is symbolically and culturally strong for women, *in order to be respected in society*. This quote shows that separation and divorce remain cultural taboos in Brazil, linked to patriarchal Catholic teachings on marriage and the family, as well as Pentecostal teachings in present day. These ideas are therefore deeply embedded in society and create structural and hierarchical inequalities for women who feel discriminated against in society if their marriage breaks down.

The staff, almost all Catholic themselves, pointed to differences they saw between Catholic Liberation Theology and modern-day Catholic Charismatic Theology, the form of Catholicism that has taken over since the demise of Liberation Theology. Related to concepts of marriage and family, these theological differences also impacted women's positions in Church and in society. I explore these changes below.

6.2.3 Gendered Impacts of the Loss of Liberation Theology

The Catholic Church was interested in human rights when it was under Liberation Theology. Liberation brings freedom and that freedom meant women could take communion even if they were separated from their husband. Or you live together, but it's essentially a marriage and you can have your children baptized. But not in Charismatic Theology. It's a different doctrine, a different way of seeing Catholicism (Marina, social worker, 29/11/2014).

Marina's quote shows that the decentralised nature of CEBs had allowed women certain 'freedoms', but Pope John Paul II's ending of Liberation Theology in favour of the 'Polish Model', created stricter rules around marriage, communion and baptising children (see

Chapter 3). Returning authority to priests and centralised churches, and closing CEBs, meant that women could no longer preach or read the Gospel during sermons.

The Catholic Charismatic Renovation which took over under the 'Polish Model', is a form of Catholicism with similarities to Evangelical Protestant worship, in that it includes a focus on participatory sermons, emotional outpourings and a personal relationship with God (Pew Forum, 2011). This is the form of Catholicism that is growing the fastest in Brazil and worldwide (ibid). During interviews, the Catholic staff who had been at the centre the longest said they felt that women had "lost a lot" since the end of Liberation Theology and that life had become more difficult for women with the growth of conservative Pentecostalism and Charismatic Catholicism. "Under Liberation Theology, the Catholic Church had been doing well, but the Charismatic Renovation changed things and people migrated to other faiths," (Lisa). Lisa's quote also points to the religious change that has been felt in Brazil with the growth of Evangelical Protestantism across the country. This growth, widespread across the Latin American continent, has been linked by many researchers to the change in Catholic doctrine and demise of Liberation Theology (e.g. Burdick, 1996; Chesnut, 2007; Freston, 1994; Froehle, 1997; Martin, 1993; Lehman, 1996; Rostas and Droogers, 1993; Stoll, 1990).

The Catholic Charismatic Church's stricter perspective made life more complicated for women and it impacted women negatively, because a divorced woman could not take communion, which affected her status in her community⁴³. The Charismatic Renovation doctrine reinforces

⁴³ This view was further supported by many older feminist activists I interviewed at demonstrations who had begun their activism under Liberation Theology. Many of them turned away from the Church after the end of Liberation Theology as they felt it no longer represented the values they had previously shared. The tenets of '*ver, julgar e agir*' (look, judge and act) had led to activism and positive

the importance of the male presence in the home. In cases of abuse, this is even harder, as a woman who has the courage to separate and even divorce her abuser suffers symbolic, structural and normative violence from the Catholic faith, which does not allow her to take communion, thereby limiting her participation in religious ritual and symbolically ostracising the woman at a time when she needs her faith for support. More recently, the current Pope Francis has tried to change this, suggesting that divorcees or the remarried should be allowed to take communion (CNA, 2016). However, he faces strong opposition in his attempts to liberalise the Church (Squires, 2015).

Despite religion not being practised or preached in the centre, it was clear that faith was important to the staff. Many had worked within the umbrella NGO for years across different projects, and were motivated by a Catholic Liberationist view towards activism and social work. This is perhaps why the staff viewed Evangelical Protestantism with a certain suspicion.

6.2.4 The Perception of Evangelical Protestantism (Pentecostalism)

When they're suffering, most women look for an Evangelical Church... when it's [the violence] been going on for a while they become Evangelical. Facing so much pain, that's what they do, they look for another space... it's almost as though pain is a vice and they pass it on to each other. It's like an alcoholic, you leave one vice for another, so

social change. However, this philosophy disappeared under the Charismatic Renovation which did not encourage activism and focused instead on prayer and a personal relationship with God. Several of the women I interviewed said they continue to identify as Catholic but they no longer attend Church because of this doctrinal change, highlighting Grace Davie's concept of 'believing without belonging' (1990).

they become Evangelical. But usually that doesn't really solve their problem... (Interview, Monica, psychologist, 13/4/2015).

The staff agreed that some abused women turned to Evangelical churches for help in cases of IPV. As highlighted in Chapter 2, according to Burdick (1990), this could be because women are more likely to seek help for domestic conflict from Pentecostal Churches or even Afro-Spiritualist centres, because they are “cults of affliction” (153) where domestic conflict can be safely articulated and blame placed on spiritual “others” rather than human agents (ibid). Based on his research in a low-income suburb of Rio, Burdick argued that Evangelical Protestantism (particularly Pentecostalism) blames wrongdoing on the devil and evil spirits which have taken over a person. Meanwhile, Catholicism places the blame for wrongdoing squarely on the shoulders of human agents who have sinned. For abused women, blaming ‘spiritual others’ is perhaps easier than blaming human agents, as the latter means holding a person with power over the woman as responsible for her pain. Within an intimate relationship where emotion exacerbates feelings of confusion and uncertainty, placing blame on negative spirits can make the violence and pain easier to interpret. Therefore, Pentecostal Churches, which often market themselves as ‘problem-solving’ places (Rostas and Droogers, 1993), are seen as sources of help for abused women (Frías, 2013; Haaken et. al., 2007; Merry, 2001).

However, at the *Family Alliance*, the female staff viewed women's conversion to Pentecostalism in cases of IPV as an issue of *leaving one vice for another*. The staff appeared to view Pentecostalism negatively, and this is because, like the *Women's Collective* (Chapter 5), they sometimes identified devout faith as a problem in relation to IPV. This was linked to Pentecostal Theology:

We have to talk to these women [Pentecostals] about God and Jesus. Who is Jesus Christ? What does he want from us? We have to discuss the fact that God is not a God who cures all ills, and He isn't a God who punishes either. He is the God of life and abundance; it is sometimes very hard to make them see that they can break with this [domestic] violence (Lisa, centre manager, 20/4/2014).

Like the feminist staff at the *Women's Collective*, the solution the professionals found at the *Family Alliance* was to talk to the women in religious terms they could relate to. However, while the staff at the *Women's Collective* used discursive techniques encouraging the questioning of theology from a feminist standpoint and the issue of masculinist interpretation of scripture, the staff at the *Family Alliance* attempted to address the issue of faith and IPV by addressing differences in Catholic and Pentecostal theology. They encouraged women to question their understanding of God and Jesus: Lisa's description of God and the focus on making women see that He is not a "God who cures," or a "God who punishes," is linked to differences in theology between Evangelical Protestantism and Catholicism. Pentecostals believe in a God who acts directly in people's lives, creating miracles through prayer or directly punishing those who have transgressed in some way and turned away from God (Freston, 1994).

According to Marina, a social worker, nowadays Pentecostal churches preach about "a God who gives, a God who, if you do something such as fast, then that God will give you something". This is linked to the Pentecostal belief that to receive something from God, you must first give, demonstrating that you are worthy (ibid). 'Giving' takes the form of financial contributions to the Church, as well as prayer and fasting, which – if done correctly and wholeheartedly – should then result in direct action from God. However, for Catholic

Liberationists, this is not the case. “In Liberation Theory you give of yourself, you donate yourself to others, and of course, when you do good things then automatically the universe sends you good things,” (Marina). Therefore, there are quite substantial theological differences between Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism.

Clearly, the Catholic (and specifically Liberationist) faith perspective at the centre was important, as it influenced the way in which some service users of faith were oriented and given advice on their domestic situation. At the same time, while the staff claimed that religion was not present in the centre because they did not hold services, Catholic values clearly influenced the ethos of the centre, symbolically represented throughout the centre with crosses and figures of Mary and Jesus.

However, although Carla, the administrative assistant, had pointed to the symbolic violence women experienced through the focus on the indissolubility of marriage, several other professionals I interviewed at the centre argued that the concept of the indissolubility of marriage was not religious but cultural. Moreover, despite the staff pointing out differences within Liberation Theology and the Charismatic Renovation which impacted women’s status within the Church and in public, they often emphasised to me that the service users at the centre were not particularly ‘religious’. As the chapter develops, I will point out how the faith perspective in the centre influenced the strategies suggested for dealing with domestic violence.

Having examined the Catholic foundations of the centre and views of the staff, I now turn to analysis of the different forms of violence the women at the centre experienced. I use the

story of Sandra to demonstrate the influence of structural and gender-based violence occurring in both private and public spaces.

6.3 Intertwining Forms of Violence

6.3.1 Characteristics of the service users

Lisa explained that the *Family Alliance* was the only centre for women dealing with violence in an area of approximately 600,000 people. Funding cuts have meant that while the centre used to deal with around 160 women per month (including new and returning service users), the centre currently only has funding for up to 100 cases per month, which according to the staff means that many women are left without appointments. With similar data to the *Women's Collective*, the centre workers said that in general, women at the *Family Alliance* are aged 26 to 55 and have between 1 and 4 children. The staff said that most of the families include people who are addicted alcohol or drugs (problems strongly prevalent in low-income communities) and in approximately 60 per cent of cases, the husband or partner is responsible for the violence, while in other cases it is family members including parents, (grown-up) children, in-laws, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles. This is substantially lower than the *Women's Collective*, where I was told that the partner was responsible for the violence in 80 per cent of cases. However, as we shall see, the *Family Alliance* takes a broader view of domestic violence in general and includes numerous perpetrators, including the woman herself, unlike the *Women's Collective* which identified IPV as the most common form of domestic violence and prioritised the woman as the victim linked to patriarchy and gender inequality in society.

The staff explained that emotional and psychological violence was the most prevalent form of violence, followed by physical violence, then material abandon and approximately 10 per cent of the women had received death threats. Many of the abused women at the centre were economically dependent on their partners as the women stayed home to look after the family, many have been out of work for several years and others survive on odd jobs, with a few being self-employed, such as Sandra. Sandra's story serves to demonstrate the numerous and interlinking forms of violence that many women face in low-income areas.

6.3.2 The Case of Sandra

I met Sandra early on during my fieldwork at the centre, as well as her daughters, Cynthia and Elena, who sometimes came to the centre. Over numerous conversations, she revealed her reasons for attending the centre, and the sense of frustration and lack of control she felt, linked to struggles with her husband, her children and the violence and poverty where she lived.

A black woman from Bahia, she had arrived in São Paulo and settled in the area in the '70s during the surge in migration to cities as people came in search of jobs. She lived in a nearby favela where she ran her own hairdressing business. Sandra had attended the centre on and off over several years as her husband had a drinking problem and was sometimes very violent. They had not had an intimate relationship for some time and he slept on the sofa. She wanted him to leave but he refused. They had twin daughters, aged 17, whom she claimed she was unable to control. "They come and go at home as they please and often stayed out all night. I know they drink and I think they take drugs." Sandra felt helpless as the girls didn't want to go to school, playing truant, and she said they were not interested in working either. Of all

the family, Sandra was the only one who had a regular job and who worked long hours, 6 days a week. However, when she came home, it was her responsibility to cook and clean, as nothing was done by the other members of the family.

Cynthia, her daughter, had been dating and fallen pregnant to the head of the local drug gang. Once pregnant, however, he had lost interest and she appeared to blame the child for ending her relationship. She had found it difficult to bond with her son, and Sandra told me she regularly came home to find the child in dirty diapers, unfed, unwashed and sometimes with bruises. The father and his family had not shown any interest in the child, and Cynthia talked of violent revenge by getting the father dragged through the streets and killed. Sandra's other daughter, Elena, had recently returned from living at her boyfriend's where she had moved when she was 16. A gang member and thief, he specialised in exploding cash machines. However, he had uncontrollable levels of jealousy and locked her in his room during the day while he was out, refusing to allow her to go to school. "Even his father says he's crazy and a psychopath" (Elena). This control and his persistent desire to make her pregnant – which she was not sure she wanted – had led her to move back home although the relationship continued on-and-off. Sandra explained:

They're very attractive girls, it doesn't matter whether they wear short skirts or jeans, men go after them. Elena has a very jealous boyfriend and she gets beaten up. I've told her already it's better she does what he says, that she wears what he wants her to wear... otherwise she's going to die. He's going to kill her (Sandra, Service User, 01/04/2015).

For Sandra, this level of male dominance and violence appeared to be completely normalised. Acceding to the demands of a jealous and violent partner was simply a way of surviving. This had occurred in her own life and was occurring in her daughters' lives. The girls also claimed to hate their father, whom they said had never taught them anything, except, according to Elena, to "raise us with beatings and *pinga*" (slang for the Brazilian spirit, Cachaça).

The intertwining forms of violence were heart-breaking, and clearly demonstrated links between forms of violence occurring in public (i.e. criminal violence perpetrated by the boyfriends involved in drug-trafficking and robbery), and violence occurring in private. The private violence included forms of IPV, with Elena's boyfriend beating her up and locking her in during the day; Sandra's husband hitting her, and Cynthia's boyfriend rejecting her once she fell pregnant and not supporting her emotionally or financially. Inter-generational violence existed because Elena and Cynthia were also beaten up by their father who was an alcoholic, and Cynthia appeared to practise forms of violence towards her son, through neglect, not feeding or changing him enough, and physical violence suggested by the bruising.

The family lived in poverty in a favela, where State penetration is low, public services are poor, and where they are subject to the violence of gangs and crime in the favela, physically and symbolically personified by the boyfriends, who practise forms of violence in both public and private spaces. Wilding (2012) points out the importance of examining links and lines of influence between different forms of violence practised in different spaces, i.e. the common tradition of separately examining what is thought of as 'urban violence' or 'domestic violence' as two different spheres. This is because violence itself cannot be separated from the social context in which it takes place, and means that violence is shaped by gendered social

relations, which highlight the (gendered) power relations within which violence operates (ibid:1). This means that domestic violence should not be considered in isolation from other forms of violence in operation and Sandra's story clearly demonstrates the interweaving forms of violence practised in different spaces and by different people.

While the centre offered emotional help and psychological support, as well as help accessing State benefits and legal advice, the circumstantial issues including poverty, urban violence and crime, as well as symbolic and normative violence through unequal gender positions, were not addressed in the centre in the same way as the *Women's Collective*, which took patriarchy and women's inequality as the starting point for domestic violence, and included attention towards the women's circumstantial difficulties. Staff at the *Family Alliance* explained that the family was at the heart of the centre's therapy for women experiencing domestic violence. This was in complete opposition to the staff at the *Women's Collective* in Chapter 5, who actively sought to break away from the 'family focus' they saw in other centres. I explore the family focus in the next Section.

6.4 Female Identity Mediated via Motherhood and the Family

6.4.1 The 'Family' Perspective

Staff at the centre repeatedly pointed out the importance of strengthening the family and "not working just with the woman and her needs" (Lisa). According to Lisa, abused women needed to "go inside themselves to understand the phenomenon of violence". This was because sustaining the family was the woman's responsibility, and someone in the family had

to “give way” for there to be dialogue. By coming to the centre “she [the abused woman] begins to change her behaviour, you have to when you are a mother... for the good of the family and to get a good result”. There was clearly a strong belief that it was women’s behaviour that needed to change to manage the violence the women were experiencing. The staff questioned women’s behaviour within the relationship, refuting the idea – supported by feminists – that women are (almost) always the victims of IPV due to unequal gender relations and the patriarchal nature of society. In interview, Monica explained the importance of the family focus:

I would never call myself a feminist... I don’t like it because you know here [the *Family Alliance*], the focus is on the woman, but if I can focus on the family then that’s what I do. The feminist focus is just to focus on the woman and she’s not everything. You have to think, is domestic violence only men’s fault? Feminism just focuses on women and I don’t agree with that. Of course we listen to the woman, but our focus is really the family, as well as listening to the children and sometimes bringing the couple in together for mediation (Monica, Psychologist, 13/04/2015).

Prioritising the family is consistent with the ethos of social work in Brazil. The 1988 Federal Constitution declares that “the family, which is the basis of society, has special State protection” (Article 226). In addition, the National Social Welfare Policy known by its abbreviation PNAS (*Política Nacional de Assistência Social*) states that:

The family, regardless of the form or model it assumes, is the mediator of the relations between the subject and the collective, continuously delimiting the movement between public and private, and managing the communal aspects of life (2004:41, translation by the author).

According to Carloto & Mariano (2008), in Brazil the family is considered to be the indispensable space for the survival and protection of the children and members of the family. As the mother has traditionally been seen as responsible for raising the children and taking care of the family, the State's focus on women is therefore strongly matrifocal, placing an emphasis on motherhood and making women responsible for the family's well-being (ibid). The family focus at the centre means that women's sense of identity and subjectivity is mediated through their gendered, normative role as wife, mother and carer for the family. As seen in the PNAS quote, this is strongly supported by the State itself, which sees the family as the link between the subjective (the individual) and the collective (society). This makes the woman the mediator between the State and the family or between the public and private realms. The State therefore has a vested interest in women maintaining their role as primary carers, which is also a service that women provide for free. Furthermore, the view on the importance of the family is clearly consistent with the centre's Catholic foundation and ethical/religious values.

The focus on the family was exemplified at one session I attended, where women were encouraged to remember happy times in their childhood that centred around their family, or special celebrations such as Easter or Christmas where family unity was the key factor. Memories of drunken, violent fathers or family abuse and growing up in poverty – which inevitably surfaced – were discouraged or ignored. In another session, a discussion on funk music⁴⁴ which several women admitted to liking, was used to remind the women that funk

⁴⁴ Funk music originated in the favelas of Rio and is widely popular throughout Brazil, although like Rap the lyrics are often strongly explicit, with women objectified and sexualised, while money, consumerism and violence are celebrated.

music led to the moral and social breakdown of the family and that they should not allow it in their homes. Like naughty children, the women were scolded for behaviour that was not thought to improve the lives of their children. Another social worker, Margarida, told the women that funk music, “devalues the human being and the family.” She asked the women to consider what their own values were, remarking that, “We must remember Jesus and think about how Jesus would act. We must remember our values and what we want to pass on to our children, such as the importance of knowing the difference between right and wrong.” Although Margarida had insisted to me that a religious perspective did not exist in the centre, she did not appear to notice when religious language permeated her talk. However, it is also possible that Margarida denied a religious perspective in the sense of direct evangelising/proselytising, but used language such as this as an expression of individual meaning.

On another occasion, a discussion on the theme of domestic violence focused on the detrimental effect that parental arguing had on the children. IPV against the woman herself often appeared to be secondary to the issue of family violence against children, and the well-being of the family as a whole was always upheld, while women’s personal problems received less attention. This focus on family violence links into feminist criticisms of the term ‘domestic violence’, which is often (and certainly in this case), subsumed in favour of discussions around violence against children (Boesten, 2014; Scheper-Hughes, 1997).

Cristela, a woman who lived in a nearby favela complained bitterly, arguably invoking a feminist interpretation of women as slaves rather than housewives: “We’re not housewives, we’re slaves of the home. Housewives are those rich women who tell others what to do.

We're slaves of the home just washing and ironing clothes, I want to know who invented this hell for us!". The other women all clamoured "men!" in response and laughed, but this demonstrates the frustration many of the women felt at their role as caretaker of the family, especially when it involved a heavy load of domestic chores. Women were expected to carry out the lion's share of the domestic chores. In addition, their poverty meant they could not pay for help in the home, and in many cases washing clothes was done by hand due to a lack of a washing machine. This increased the workload women had in the home.

6.4.2 The Focus on Improving Family Relations

The women were taught that forgiveness was important and to question their own behaviour and reactions: "If he's drinking and it annoys you, try to figure out why it annoys you so much," said Margarida to the group of women, as it was her belief that this usually triggered a negative memory from the woman's childhood and led to rising tensions. The women were taught that they were complicit in the violence because they allowed it to happen. To stop it, they needed to learn how to talk to their husbands and family. Women were also told they often exacerbated the violence: "Don't shout at him when he's drunk and don't have a go at him the next day when he's hungover," said Margarida. Several women admitted they did this to get back at their husbands after a drunken, violent episode. Instead the women were encouraged to find better times when they could talk and ask their partners why they had acted violently. "Men don't know how to speak about their emotions like women do. They know they've done wrong and they feel terrible about it, and they don't know how to deal with that so they feel worse and end up bottling it all up and doing it again. They are suffering too," said Margarida.

Some of the women found this advice useful and explained to me that previously they were often mean to partners or children because they were hurt by their behaviour. This annoyed the child or partner trying to make amends, and the cycle of poor communication continued. For example, several of the women I spoke to at the centre did admit to some physical and verbal abuse of their children as a way of controlling them. Most of the women explained that they themselves had been hit by their parents as they were growing up, so they saw this violence as natural, supporting the staff's identification of domestic violence as generational. It was only through attending the centre that the women had learned to try to talk to their children instead of shouting when angry, and to refrain from hitting them. For example, Celia, who struggled with her wayward teenage daughter, admitted that she had changed her behaviour towards her daughter since attending the centre:

I used to hit my daughter and call her a slut and a whore when she came home, especially after she stayed out for several days in a row, but I try not to do that anymore. At the centre, they taught us it's better to talk things through, to be calm (Celia, 01/04/2015).

Therefore, the centre focused on encouraging women to change their behaviour in relation to family members. This was sometimes helpful, but the emphasis also lay on the women finding solutions and prioritising their family well-being. For many of the women such as Sandra, these were temporary solutions which offered little transformation when the cycles of abuse began again.

For example, Sandra was frustrated with the advice from the centre concerning her relationship. When she told the staff that she wanted to separate from her husband, she said they encouraged her to forgive him and try to make the relationship work. The centre had

offered them mediation, and Sandra said that for a while domestic relations had improved. However, as the cycle of drinking and violence had begun again, she had returned to the centre, which was when I met her. “The women at the centre encouraged me to work things out with my husband and to forgive him. For a while it was ok. But what am I supposed to do when he drinks and hits me, calling me names? I just feel so trapped.” Sandra felt helpless and overwhelmed, and regularly broke down in tears.

As Sandra’s story demonstrates, the women were also offered mediation services at the centre as a strategy to reduce violence and improve domestic relations. Below, I examine this strategy.

6.4.3 Mediation as a Strategy for Violence Reduction

Before the creation of the Maria da Penha Law in 2006, men were banned from entering the *Family Alliance*. However, from 2009 the staff decided that men could be brought in for mediation if the abused women agreed. The timing of this, three years after the implementation of the Maria da Penha law, suggests that the law caused some changes that the staff felt moved to address. As explained in Chapter 3, cases of domestic violence were usually held in small claims courts where men were required to apologise and give the woman a gift, usually in the form of a *cesta básica*, which was essentially a gift box of food (Macaulay, 2005).

The Maria da Penha law was designed to stop the mediation that had been occurring in police stations and small claims courts, as it was argued that women’s complaints were being trivialised (Hautzinger, 2007). Even before cases got to court, the police were notorious for

trivialising ‘domestic violence’ and encouraging the woman to withdraw the complaint (ibid). This trivialisation was one of the reasons behind the creation of female-staffed police stations in 1985⁴⁵. Activists also argued that it let men off the hook and did not force a change in their (violent) behaviour (ibid).

However, since the Maria da Penha Law, even abused women’s behaviour has been more rigidly controlled, as denunciations of IPV made to the police can no longer be withdrawn except with special permission from a judge. Moreover, cases of domestic violence in which there is physical violence now carry automatic 3-month minimum mandatory sentences and these cases cannot be withdrawn (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017). Mediation therefore no longer occurs at police stations and cases are now heard in special courts with judges trained in gender issues and domestic violence⁴⁶.

At the *Family Alliance*, staff were concerned by the punitive nature of the law and the lack of conversation around violent behaviour with the men themselves. Several staff argued that if women could be heard, then surely men could be heard too. Marina believed the Maria da Penha law was too punitive, without offering alternative spaces where men’s violent behaviour could be discussed:

For men, the only thing is punishment and anything that punishes men, makes them angry. Nowadays, men go to court. Before the Maria da Penha Law, there was the *cesta básica*, there were some

⁴⁵ See Chapter 3 and Hautzinger (2007).

⁴⁶ However, there is still a serious lack of these specialised courts (Instituto Patricia Galvão, 2017). During fieldwork, I attended the first ‘Gender’ course for current judges from specialised domestic violence courts, which was then going to be implemented across the country.

things... But now there's no questioning and talking about their behaviour, men go straight to prison. And even if there is the occasional help group for men, they have been sent there as a punishment. And nothing that has to do with punishment ever works... (Marina, Social Worker, 01/04/2015).

Marina's comment seems to suggest a belief that mediation and the *cesta básica* were sometimes positive, and brings up the growth in punitive charges towards men who commit physically violent acts, which she perceives as negative. The staff felt ambivalent about the issue of going to the police, registering a complaint and the Maria da Penha Law itself, because they believed that too much blame was then placed on men. According to data I obtained from the centres under study, it is interesting to note that in 2010 only 19 per cent of women at the *Family Alliance* had filed a police report (known as 'B.O.' *Boletim de Ocorrência*), against the perpetrator, compared to 30 per cent of women who had done so at the *Women's Collective* in the same year. In addition, less than 10 per cent of the women at the *Family Alliance* were in a legal process against the perpetrator of violence although sadly this data is unavailable for the *Women's Collective*. However, as staff from the *Women's Collective* actively encouraged women to report their abuser to the police, the number of women making police reports is likely to be linked to the level of encouragement (or lack of) from CDCM staff.

At the *Family Alliance*, it was felt that women should also monitor and question their own behaviour:

Going to the police is a complaint about his behaviour, but here, we make them question themselves. Who am I? How did I act? We ask questions so that they think about themselves too, the way they have acted (Marina, Social Worker, 01/04/2015).

Therefore, even though CDCMs are solely for women, the staff at the *Family Alliance* had taken it upon themselves to act as mediators of the violence between couples because the staff disagreed with the punitive measures of the MDP law. Mediation in centres aimed at helping women overcome their situation of domestic violence is controversial. In the feminist analysis of the unequal power relations between men and women in society, mediation is seen as unhelpful. Many feminist domestic violence professionals believe that once the relationship has reached the level of physical violence, it is hard to rebuild. For example, Westlund (1999) argues that:

It is patently clear that, for battered women, many of the material preconditions for autonomy – bodily integrity, freedom of movement, freedom to form interpersonal connections with people other than batterers – are more likely to be established outside of the battering relationship than within it (1054).

In Sandra's case, once her husband began drinking again, the cycle of abuse returned, which suggests that mediation had only worked temporarily and was not a strategy that empowered an abused woman. If anything, mediation without denunciation to the police, could leave an abuser in a greater position of power, unconcerned that he would suffer legal and punitive implications for the violence.

Also of interest to note at the *Family Alliance*, was that as all CDCMs, the centre was supposed to provide legal advice, in the form of a part-time lawyer who advises women on their legal position and rights. However, when I arrived I discovered the centre had not had a lawyer for over a year. The staff claimed this was because the salary was extremely low. However, Sandra was frustrated with the lack of legal advice. Due to the drinking and IPV Sandra

experienced from her husband, her sense of inability at controlling her daughters, and worried about the violence her grandson was experiencing, Sandra wanted to move out of the family home and rent a little room for herself and her grandson. On numerous occasions, Sandra claimed she wanted her daughters to leave when they turned 18, because she could not control them. However, Cynthia would respond by threatening to never allow Sandra to see her grandson again if she made them leave. Sandra was not sure whether she could move out with her grandson and wanted legal advice, but she had not been able to obtain it from the centre. It seems that while the lack of a lawyer is undoubtedly linked to the low salary, there was also perhaps a lack of interest in finding one from the centre's perspective, linked to the preference for extra-judicial means of resolving domestic conflict, and focus on family mediation.

Creating a Space for Men

While conducting my fieldwork, the centre had begun a small group outside of regular office hours to address male violence. Attendance was voluntary and the group was struggling as few men had agreed to attend or failed to show up even if they had agreed to attend. They intended to run it as a pilot program in the hope that they might receive State funding should the program be proven to help. There are currently very few programs in Brazil addressing male violence, so this was quite novel. Margarida, the social worker explained:

We realised that men need a space to be heard too. He has a story, just as the woman has her story. He is simply reproducing what he has learned over thousands of years. So, looking at the violence trans-generationally, we can see that he comes from a context of violence that he is just reproducing (Margarida, social worker, 01/04/2015).

This male focus also meant the staff had decided to change the terminology that was used. Rather than calling a man 'the aggressor' (*o agressor*) he was called 'the author' of the violence because, according to Margarida, it was understood that he acted as an aggressor only in certain moments within the family but not necessarily in other spheres:

If you listen to the women they say, "if you saw him on the street, outside of home, he's another person". That's because he is another person in those spheres, those scenarios don't bring back memories and trigger things in him that he experienced. So outside he is another person. When he enters the home, he acts in a way that he remembers. Is he aware of this? of course not" (Margarida, social worker, 01/04/2015).

Margarida went on to explain that from her perspective, if a man hit a woman while he was not using drugs or alcohol, then he did not have a psychological problem, at which point she agreed that he was "a born aggressor" and the use of the terminology was correct in that moment. If he was only violent towards his wife or family in the context of the home or had drunk or taken drugs which had caused him to be violent, causing temporary mental disturbances, then he was 'author' of the violence as he was not necessarily violent in other times and spaces. This perspective highlights the belief that men are sometimes violent towards women in the domestic sphere due to family violence the man witnessed growing up. It also essentially denies any link between urban forms of violence and the violence experienced by women in the home. This is a theme that will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 8. Finally, this perspective links violence to situational trigger factors, such as the use of drugs and alcohol, but does not factor in patriarchal VAW from a gender-based perspective, making domestic violence a personal issue, rather than a political, collective issue.

The staff at the centre also emphasised on numerous occasions the role of women in perpetrating violence, which I examine below.

6.5 The Violent Mother and Female to Male Violence

At the *Family Alliance*, women were encouraged to question their own behaviour in relation to male violence. In fact, the staff believed that 'domestic violence' was misunderstood in society and a belief, echoed by the professionals at the centre, was that the source of male domestic violence against women was strongly linked to the mother:

I think the media portrays violence all wrong, highlighting the moment of the physical act itself. But far worse than that is psychological violence. And where does psychological violence start? When you're young, your mother hits you and in turn you hit your siblings. When a man reproduces this violence, he's seeing the mother. It's the figure of the mother. Who looks after children most of the time? It's the mother. Who teaches us to make this distinction between man and woman? It's the mother. Who raises an aggressive man? It's the mother. So, it's we women who need to look at ourselves, at what we're doing. Is the man an aggressor because it's innate? Rarely. Who hurt him? It's the mother. When he looks at his wife, he's seeing his mother. All the anger that he has towards his mother focuses on the woman in front of him, on his wife. In reality, it's not his wife who's there, in front of him, it's his mother (Lisa, Centre Manager, 21/11/2014).

In Lisa's eyes, domestic violence was linked to the physical and in particular psychological trauma of violence in childhood, which she claimed was directly linked to the mother. According to Lisa, mothers hit their children, hurting them both physically and emotionally,

and mothers therefore raised violent men, whose subsequent violence towards their wives was due to the anger men felt towards their mothers.

The staff felt that far more attention was needed on female violence towards men. According to Margarida: “women hit and women beat”, and they often did not realise it. The staff viewed the violence as inter-generational, and violent women were reproducing what they themselves had experienced in the home. “I get women here and their husbands say to me: “she hits me. I don’t know what to do with her, is there somewhere for me [to get help]?” I have to tell them that there isn’t,” said Monica. The staff believed that when men hit their wives it was their mothers they were really seeing, especially as wives could not help but treat their husbands like children, replicating the men’s mothers:

Sometimes we [women] act towards our husbands as though they were our children that we have to educate. Who developed this absurd idea that husbands have to be re-educated inside the home? We believe this and we replicate it and we try to recreate and re-educate this individual without any respect for his story. And every act has a consequence (Monica, Psychologist, 13/04/2015).

Monica appeared to be equating male to female violence in the home as a result of the consequence of an act of attempting to re-educate men and treating them like children, which made men angry and reminded them of the violence their mothers had inflicted on them. Female violence towards men is unfortunately very un-researched and results are conflicting: for example, Straus (2014) argues that there is a high rate of assault by women and that women are often the initiators of violence. Straus suggests that female violence needs to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of programs to prevent and stop violence against

women. However, others have rejected Straus' analysis of a form of "mutual combat" between couples, arguing that women's use of force against intimate male partners is resistive and self-defensive (Larance, 2015). Moreover, while violence against men is known to occur, statistics of male VAW are overwhelming - as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the WHO estimates that at least 1 in 3 women around the world experience violence at the hands of a partner or ex-partner (RHR & WHO, 2013). Also, international organisations such as the United Nations agree with the feminist argument that VAW is linked to patriarchy and women's unequal position in societies around the world (UN, 1993), meaning that there are important structural elements to VAW embedded in society. Therefore, while female violence against men does exist and firmly needs more research, it is clearly not a problem of equal weight compared to male VAW.

In addition, the family is identified as a place of danger for many children around the world, and violence against children is understood to take many forms, from physical and sexual to verbal abuse, as well as neglect, one of the most common forms of violence faced by children (UNESCO, 2006; UNICEF, 2014). Neither of these UN reports on violence against children have identified mothers as more likely to commit violence against their children than fathers, and both reports tend to refer to 'family violence' against children which includes violence perpetrated by parents, siblings and other extended family members. However, statistics from Brazil demonstrate that sexual violence against children, regardless of the sex of the child, is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men in 98 per cent of cases (Cerqueira and Coelho, 2014).

Furthermore, Brazil also figures high on the list of child homicides, and the majority of homicides are perpetrated by men (UNICEF, 2014), which means that most lethal violence against children is perpetrated by men. Therefore, there is currently no data that can support the importance the *Family Alliance* gives towards female on male violence or which explains why the mother – and not the father – was held responsible for raising children who later practised violence against their own partners. Barely any discussions I witnessed at the centre focused on the man's role as a father. For example, Sandra's husband was not held responsible as part of the family's problem for being a poor example of a father, as the responsibility for the well-being of the family was almost always linked to the mother.

6.5.1 Examples to Explain the Focus on the Mother

During interviews and in general, daily conversations, *all* the staff impressed upon me the importance of remembering the women's role in domestic violence. The staff believed that in most cases, women were just as guilty of abuse towards their children and this was almost worse than male violence towards children, because mothers were the ones responsible for raising children. Stories examined earlier, such as Celia who said that she did hit and verbally assault her daughter, help point to the centre's focus on female violence.

Moreover, the women also revealed behaviour that supported the staff's view that the women were not always good role models for their children. For example, Celia explained how her husband liked to drink until he passed out, but she said this was not always a bad thing because "you can take advantage of people when they're drunk". Celia explained that she stole money from her partner: "when he passes out, that's when I go looking for the money he has on him, he doesn't wake up because he's so drunk and I can get the money I

need.” Celia’s supposedly ‘underhand’ way of extracting the money she needed was strongly criticised by the staff when she revealed this behaviour, and served to support the staff’s belief that the women were not ‘innocent’ themselves of bad behaviour.

However, there is another way of looking at this story which the staff did not appear to take into account. Celia was dependent on her husband’s money in order to feed and maintain the family, but he often spent this money on alcohol. Celia says that when he passes out, she can get the money she *needs*. As the family lives in poverty, this is money she needs to feed and sustain her family. In this case, the husband drinking away the little money the family has is the ‘violent’ act, because of the consequences on the family. Therefore, Celia is taking money that her husband should be giving her so that she can perform her duty of looking after the well-being of the family. Moralising upon Celia’s supposedly ‘transgressive’ act of taking money she is owed when her husband passes out, does not address the gender inequality, poverty and structural disadvantages that Celia faces in her marriage and social situation.

I also met several women who felt overwhelmed and on a number of occasions they arrived, child in tow, claiming they no longer felt capable of looking after the child. These women were suffering enormously – grinding poverty, problematic childcare, violence in the home as well as the high levels of urban violence surrounding them, were often just too much. “My God I’ve suffered, I was born in the favela, but managed to get out, please God if I come back in another life I just pray that I don’t get sent back to the favela,” said Janaina, a woman who appeared to be at her wits end.

However, for the staff at the *Family Alliance*, women rejecting their normative and biologically-linked role as mothers who love and care for their children, was simply evidence of women no longer wanting to deal with their responsibilities. For example, returning to Sandra's story, her daughter Cynthia's inability to relate to her son and the subsequent abuse he suffered was linked to his mother. She was not looking after him properly and was neglecting to feed him or change his nappy during the day. This is clearly a form of violence. However, the boyfriend's violent behaviour towards Cynthia and lack of care for the child is not addressed as part of the reason why Cynthia has struggled so much with her child. Similarly, Sandra was blamed for not being able to control her daughters. As mothers, they are simply expected to love their children, which links into the Christian view of the mother as self-less and giving (Juschka, 2001). Despite the structural hardships including poverty, urban violence, and high levels of machismo and control based on gendered norms, the staff at the *Family Alliance* did not accept these issues as reasons for not properly effecting their duties as mothers. The effects of structural and urban violence, and even IPV, are minimised by the centre, while family unity is prioritised, regardless of the difficulties of living together. Therefore, as highlighted above, at the *Family Alliance*, IPV was viewed as a personal and not a collective or political issue.

6.5.2 Problems linked to the Lack of Collective Identity

I felt a pervasive sense of irritation from the staff towards many of the women, who were often perceived as lazy and lacking responsibility. For example, Monica explained that women often did not come to the sessions that had been arranged, citing either problems of transport, or a lack of money and work. However, her belief was that the women ended up *dando o jeitinho*, a Brazilian expression which suggests 'finding a slippery way' to make an

excuse. In the staff's eyes, the women's ability to come to the centre of their own accord and access services for free, meant that they often did not appreciate the services they received.

In another example, during my time at the centre the women had access to 30 minute, individual massage and Pilates sessions. The women loved these sessions, commenting on the physical and emotional benefits they gained from the exercise and massage. Many of them had never experienced massage before and the gentle act of being touched in a healing manner was very profound, particularly for women who regularly experienced physical violence. For several women, it was the only time in the week they had a moment to themselves and many suffered physical ailments they felt improved with the massage. On one occasion, the women were told the centre was losing funding for the massage and Pilates classes. Lisa suggested that each woman write a letter to the council, explaining how much they liked the sessions and the benefit they derived from it. The women looked uncomfortable: several of them were illiterate and clearly no one had ever written a letter like that before; they had no idea how to go about it and the women were not going to be able to do it on their own.

Lisa, however, was frustrated by their apparent lack of desire to act and she said she felt the women were "just lazy and wanted everything done for them". In her eyes, "if they lost the funding, it was their own fault." The attitude from the staff appeared to be to be a case of, 'if they can't be bothered then neither can we.' However, based on extensive participatory observation, I believe that writing a letter such as the one Lisa was demanding, without help or an example to go by, was beyond the capabilities of many of the women attending the centre. The women at the centre were structurally and hierarchically on the lowest 'levels' of

society: poor, black and mixed race, often living in illegal settlements, they are women on the edge of society. The little interaction they have had with State institutions was permeated with classism, racism and sexism (see Chapters 2 and 3). The lack of activism in the centre, and the lack of discussion around rights compared to the *Women's Collective*, meant that the women were not effectively taught that collective action could help them demand rights that were theirs.

6.6 Conclusion

This case study of an FBO as a provider of public welfare services to abused women highlights that religiously-based organisations have mixed impacts on gender relations and an abused woman's ability to deal with violence in her life. It would appear that the staff's own faith and the Catholic Liberationist ethos of the centre – despite its inclusion as an ostensibly secular branch of the Welfare State – influenced the way abused women were treated at the centre. I found that Catholicism, and specifically Liberation Theology, played an important role in the fundamental value structure at the centre.

Religion outside of Catholicism was perceived as 'other' by centre staff and sometimes as an impediment by the women trying to deal with violence. Addressing the needs of abused Pentecostal women was based on discussing theological differences between Pentecostalism and Catholicism, rather than examining the gender dynamic around faith and violence. I found that being women of faith themselves, the staff at the centre did not generally perceive religion – especially Catholicism, to affect IPV negatively. However, they lamented the gendered 'losses' women experienced with the demise of Liberation Theology. My data from

Brazil demonstrates the impact this change has had on women and their loss of status inside and outside the home and the community. Moreover, it is perhaps the lack of the centre's focus of a link between IPV and religion which meant that the service users themselves appeared to bring up the theme of religion much less than at the *Women's Collective*. This is perhaps also because religious symbols appeared all over the centre and the Catholic basis of the centre was apparent, reducing discussion by both service users and staff on the role of religion in relation to violence. Faith, especially Catholicism, was understood as the norm and not questioned as patriarchal.

By providing a gendered analysis, this chapter has demonstrated that domestic violence in the *Family Alliance* is viewed as personal and not a collective or political issue. The feminist centre such as the *Women's Collective* in Chapter 5 appeared to empower women experiencing violence in ways that allowed them to address the structural and symbolic violence they experienced within both State and religious institutions. However, the family focus at the *Family Alliance* means that women's sense of identity and subjectivity at the centre is mediated through their gendered, normative role as wife, mother and carer for the family. I demonstrated here that this is strongly supported by the State itself, which sees the family as the link between the subjective (the individual) and the collective (society). Therefore, I argue that the woman is seen as the mediator between the State and the family or between the public and private realms. The State therefore has a vested interest in women maintaining their role as primary carers, which is related to the free labour and social cohesion that women and families provide. Furthermore, the view on the importance of the family is clearly consistent with the centre's Catholic foundation and ethical/religious values, suggesting a certain collusion between State and Church, further evidenced through the social

work aim of family restitution above all else. As I described in Chapter 3 and clearly demonstrate here, this is a relationship which has been naturalised and reinforced to different degrees since colonialism and demonstrates continuity rather than change in relation to women's position in society.

The focus on the family and in particular women's role in the family, explains why the *Family Alliance* encouraged women to question their own role within IPV. In addition, at the centre, IPV appeared to be treated as secondary to the idea of 'family violence' and the focus of the effect on the children. This essentially means that the idea of a woman's 'right' to live without violence was subsumed by the importance of the family. Ultimately, so-called 'traditional' gender roles are supported, as are gender relations which uphold patriarchy and the importance of the male in the home.

Moreover, the staff argued that a mother's violence against her children caused psychological harm, which caused the violence some men later practised against their wives. Male IPV against women was therefore interpreted as stemming from the mother, and it was because of the unresolved anger men felt towards their mothers. This perspective essentially blamed women as the original causes of the violence which was later perpetrated against them, meaning that male VAW was to an extent excused and minimised. Instead, women were encouraged to examine and modify their own behaviour in relation to violence, within intimate relationships and as perpetrators of family violence themselves.

The centre's focus on the preservation of the family led to the practice of male partners being invited to the centre for mediation. I pointed out that the use of mediation as a strategy for

violence reduction between couples was established as a new practice in the centre two/three years after the implementation of the Maria da Penha law in 2006. However, the centre clearly felt that a lack of mediation and the use of carceral punishment was *detrimental* to men and the family unit. It was interesting to note that 11 per cent less women attending the *Women's Family Alliance* had made official complaints (known as 'B.O.' *Boletim de Ocorrência*) against their aggressor compared to the number of women who had done so at the *Women's Collective* (i.e. only 19 per cent of women had made a B.O at the *Women's Family Alliance* compared to 30 per cent at the *Women's Collective*, see Chapter 5). This leads me to suggest that the Catholic-based centre clearly preferred extra-judicial forms of addressing male violence but simultaneously this suggests that women's right to report violence is not being consistently encouraged.

Although the *Family Alliance* is providing support to female survivors of violence, my research reveals that because women's *identity* and *subjectivity* lie in their roles as wives and mothers, the centre offers little real possibilities of change for abused women, who are encouraged to forgive violent husbands and question their own behaviour, for the good of the family. In this way, it would appear that both the Church and the State put women at the helm of family as cornerstone of society, without actually giving them the tools (freedom, autonomy, resources, security) to fulfil that role. Furthermore, while violence is addressed at the centre, because the feminist analysis of patriarchy is absent, an understanding of 'gender equality' becomes a focus on both male and female violence which appear to be given equal weight. However, I have shown that male violence against women and children is a problem of much larger scale than female violence against men, despite the lack of data around this topic.

Chapters 5 and 6 have therefore examined the role that religion can play in differing gendered understandings of violence, and the ways in which Catholicism and Pentecostalism have been addressed in two different State centres for abused women, ostensibly offering the same support. The following Chapter 7 explores in more detail the impacts on women's subjectivity and possibilities for change and transformation for battered women attending a Pentecostal program at the *Universal Church Kingdom of God* (UCKG). This is not a State-funded centre, but rather one which is developing closer links with State services and offering its programs for abused women as an additional or alternative program to overburdened State services.

CHAPTER 7 PROJECT RAHAB: DISCIPLINING ‘FEMININITY’, RACE, AND PENTECOSTAL CONVERSION AS THE ANSWER TO VAW

7.1 Introduction

The Igrejinha wasn't a small temple as the name suggested, it was just smaller than the 10,000-seat Solomon Temple next door, headquarters of the *Universal Church Kingdom of God* (UCKG) in Brazil, São Paulo. Women and girls of various ages and skin colour filled the auditorium, so much so that they spilled into extra rooms and even the car-park. Thousands had arrived from all over São Paulo State, as this was the first *Inner Cure* meeting held by Cristiane Cardoso⁴⁷, and run by volunteers of *Project Rahab*, a project aimed at women experiencing violence, created by Cardoso in 2011. After a discussion on the importance of inner beauty and not just outward appearance, Marilyn, an American convert who lived in São Paulo, took the stage. In her heavily accented Portuguese, she told the story of how even though she had been born into a Christian family, she was sexually abused and had ended up attracted to violent men with no morals. Now, because she had accepted Jesus as her saviour and converted to Pentecostalism, she was free of the pain and liberated from evil.

⁴⁷ Cristiane Cardoso is the eldest daughter of Edir Macedo, founder and leader of UCKG. She is an author, TV and radio presenter and has emerged as a leader of the women's movement within the Church.

The frankness of Marilyn's words certainly had an impact. Not only had she brought up sexual abuse, a theme not readily discussed in many circles, she had also brought up the uniting theme of negative experiences in relationships with men. Many women in the room appeared to identify with elements of her experiences, nodding, crying and listening intently. The fact that Marilyn was a *gringa*⁴⁸ only intensified a sense of shared experience: violence did not only happen to Brazilian women, it happened to foreign women too. Later, one of the *Project Rahab* volunteers explained to me: "Marilyn can talk about this because she's cured. By accepting Jesus as her saviour, God has healed her. So, she can talk about her experiences because they don't affect her anymore." In the Church the women's prayers, following Cardoso's lead, became louder and louder in a style particular to Pentecostal worship, until all around women were on their knees or holding their arms up to the sky, pleading with God to cure their pain as tears of grief rolled down their cheeks. Some women fell to the floor, screaming and writhing as negative spirits were released.

The noise and emotion were overwhelming. While I had attended many Pentecostal sermons, and was used to the volume of the prayers and the exorcism of bad spirits, I was struck on this occasion by the depth of what appeared to be so much pain in so many women. The creation of a space in which women's suffering could be openly discussed appeared to resonate with thousands, and women from all over the state had come together to express their sorrow. In addition, the possibility of being cured of pain, which could happen in an instant with acceptance of Jesus Christ as your saviour, must have been a strong attraction to women suffering. "It's such a relief, coming here" said the girl next to me, tearfully, "I come

⁴⁸ *Gringa* (or *gringo* for a man) is an informal term used to designate a foreigner in Brazil.

here to get things off my chest, God hears your prayers and anyway... I don't know who else to talk to about these things." (Fieldnotes, March 2nd, 2015, São Paulo).

While classic Pentecostalism (e.g. Assemblies of God Church) highlights gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, neo-Pentecostalism – the brand of Pentecostalism promoted by UCKG – is considered more modern and dynamic (Mariano, 1999). Rather than preaching the need for suffering, sectarianism and removal from 'the world', neo-Pentecostalism uses mass communication through social media, radio and TV (ibid). Religious sermons are brought to life with evangelical rock, samba and axé bands, among others (ibid). Pentecostals believe that a great cosmic battle is raging on earth between God and the Devil in the quest for the dominion of humanity. To defeat Evil, followers must take part in campaigns of 'cure and release' from negative spirits, which are exorcised during regular attendance at emotion-packed sermons (ibid), for example the sermon above. Instead of rejecting the world, neo-Pentecostals strongly affirm it by actively participating in political life and defending values seen as cultural and institutional such as the importance of heterosexual marriage and the so-called 'traditional' family nucleus (Almeida, 2009).

In this chapter, I examine the role of Project Rahab. Through analysis of Project Rahab's rhetoric and activism around domestic violence, I question why and how an influential neo-Pentecostal Church has become increasingly involved with female victims of violence. Section 6.2 examines the links and growing proximity of Project Rahab services and State services for VAW, as well as their co-opting of certain State/public spaces. I highlight that attention to women's issues and UCKG's plethora of heavily gendered programs, all under the banner of 'Third Sector' help, also link into Macedo's political aims of the construction of a Pentecostal

nation. Using Foucault's concept of pastoral power (2007, [2004] [1977-1978]), Section 6.3 provides an analysis of the power relations to which battered women are subject in Project Rahab and UCKG itself, and I underscore the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship between Project Rahab volunteers and abused women. In Section 6.4. I turn to examination of the strategies and techniques of self-care that Project Rahab teach and their gendered, as well as racial, implications. Section 6.5 provides the summary of these findings and addresses some of the broader ramifications.

7.2 The Blurring of Project Rahab and State Services

7.2.1 Becoming Part of the State Women's Services Network

Project Rahab is very active in the public sphere. Volunteers demonstrate in areas with high numbers of poor, vulnerable people (e.g. *Praça da Sé* in São Paulo, which has a high number of homeless). In public, their discourse underscores the Maria da Penha Law and they argue for the importance of making women's legal rights count. In fact, in Rio Grande do Sul, one of the more southern and richer states of Brazil, Project Rahab volunteers have been officially incorporated into the *Women's Services Network* (Godllywood, 2016). According to the joint Municipal Secretary for Women, Waleska Vasconcellos, in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, programs such as Project Rahab are "important examples of institutional and citizen collaboration with the municipal network" (Correio do Povo, 2014). This approximation of public and private services means that Project Rahab organisers take part in monthly municipal meetings and collaborate with the State-funded *Women's Defence and Community Centres* (CDCMs, i.e. the organisations under study in Chapters 5 + 6), the police and women's

shelters. Therefore, other public services such as the police or hospitals can direct women towards *either* State-funded CDCMs *or* to Project Rahab.

Co-opting Secular, Public Space: Volunteering in Women's Police Stations (WPDs)

In several States (notably São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul), Project Rahab has established partnerships which allows their volunteers to work in Brazil's female-run police stations⁴⁹. Renata, one of the *Project Rahab* volunteers explained to me:

We volunteer especially on Mondays and Tuesdays, the days where statistically the highest number of complaints are registered. We tell them about Project Rahab and invite them to the sessions. We talk to them about whether they really want to register a complaint or not, some women are very confused when they arrive at the police station and it makes work frustrating for the policewomen working there. The women want a shoulder to cry on and the police chief just wants the facts! The female police chief where I volunteer calls us her little angels and says she doesn't know what she'd do without us! (Renata PR volunteer, 14/03/2015).

Allowing Church members to volunteer in police stations is controversial, because women experiencing IPV are extremely vulnerable, and data suggest that they often only come forward after repeated violent episodes, or when the violence affects their children (Schraiber et al., 2003). Therefore, a woman experiencing abuse may have taken a long time and needed a lot of courage to come to a police station. As Pentecostals focus heavily on proselytising, their motives for volunteering in police stations and inviting women to attend Project Rahab

⁴⁹ In 1985, Brazil was one of the first countries in the world to begin running police stations staffed with women and *for* women (Hautzinger, 2007 + See Chapter 2).

sessions are linked to their belief that religious, Pentecostal conversion is the answer to the women's problems. In conversation with Silvia, one of the Project Rahab organisers, she revealed that the project was actually reviewing its practice of working in WPDs because, "we're not getting the results we want." Silvia admitted: "our main aim is to get the women to come to the Temple, but if it's too far away they won't come. We might just focus on WPDs closer to UCKG temples." This demonstrates that the practice of volunteering in police stations is strongly linked to encouraging the women to attend Church, where the aim is to cure their pain and problems through religious conversion.

Mirroring Help Offered by State Services – With Spirituality

The survivors⁵⁰ of violence are encouraged to attend a 12-week course entitled *Inner Cure* which runs weekly or monthly depending on the location. Project Rahab volunteers insist that anyone of any faith is welcome on the course and that the women who come to them for help do not have to be members of the Church in order to access their services. This underscores the way Project Rahab is initially presented as not having a religious aim.

In addition, in a mirror image of the assistance offered to women in the State-funded CDCMs, Project Rahab claim that their volunteers (all official members of UCKG) include social workers, psychologists and lawyers, in order to be able to offer the emotional, psychological and legal tripod of help that abused women need. Unlike the CDCMs, however, women are told that by the end of the course, they will have been cured of all their pain and suffering.

⁵⁰ This is the term used at *Project Rahab* and it is borrowed here from feminist, secular language which argues that in order to empower women, they should not be seen as victims but as survivors of violence.

Project Rahab was keen to point out that it was offering emotional and spiritual help not offered in State centres. In conversations with Project Rahab volunteers, they told me they felt that the State centres did not go to the root of the problem, because they lacked a religious focus. “These places [CDCMs] miss the most important thing, which is God. With Him you are cured, without him, you’re not” (Silvia).

7.2.2 Faith-based and Secular Conflict: The Case of Maria-Lisa

The conflict over the provision of services to battered women and the importance of faith was highlighted in one of my conversations with a Project Rahab volunteer, Maria-Lisa. She herself was a survivor of domestic violence, having suffered the trauma of being sexually abused by her father. She now worked as a social worker in a State centre that specialised in domestic violence. Consistent with her Pentecostal faith, Maria-Lisa said that through numerous sessions of cure and liberation, she had been healed of her pain by God. However, she admitted that the link between her professional job as a social worker in a secular, State institution and her religious belief was difficult to reconcile: when she saw battered women in the State centre, she desperately wanted to show them that the answer to their ills lay in Christ. “I just know that if they simply allowed Jesus into their lives, they could be healed⁵¹” said Maria-Lisa. In her opinion, State centres lacked a more spiritual approach, which she was able to offer at Project Rahab.

Maria-Lisa felt that the focus on women’s rights was not always helpful, as it ignored the family situation most of the women found themselves in. “Public policies and laws, they all

⁵¹ Faith healing is a strong part of Pentecostal belief (e.g. see Steigenga & Cleary, 2007).

help [against domestic violence]. But women have hopes and dreams, they aren't just the sum of the violence they suffer, so we can't just focus on the violence." She explained that abused women were generally in bad shape and often unsure of what they wanted, but often wanting to report their husbands to the police because, she claimed "they want revenge." Maria-Lisa continued: "Ok, so they make a statement to the police, he's arrested... but what then? The Maria da Penha Law has caused women to run off in search of their rights without thinking about the fact that they don't live alone and that they need to think about their family."

Christianity places a high priority on the family and many Christian women feel that the feminist movement's anti-violence campaigns focus purely on the battered woman and her needs and desires, to the detriment of the family (echoing the *Women's Family Alliance* in Chapter 5). Maria-Lisa argued: "What about the woman's right to be loved and looked after, what about her right to be feminine? Showing women the path of more violence... is that realising their rights?". By *path of more violence* it was clear that Maria-Lisa was equating denouncing IPV and realising woman's legal rights as further forms of violence because it would lead to the potential incarceration of the husband and either temporary or permanent breakup of the family. Maria-Lisa herself had chosen not to report her father to the police, saying that although she wanted him to be punished, she believed that his day of reckoning would be with God and she did not want to break up the new family he had built.

Maria-Lisa quite clearly believed that the break-up of the family ultimately rested with the woman for reporting the abuser to the police, an attitude the feminist movement have tried hard to campaign against as it blames the victim rather than the perpetrator of violence.

Further, her focus on God's punishment rather than State punishment is a complex issue. If a person believe that violent men will be punished by God, it becomes much less urgent to have them punished by the State. However, incarceration is not only about punishment, it is also about protection of the victim-survivor and other potential victims. Maria-Lisa's father had gone on to have another family, and the possibility exists that he may sexually abuse other children, as he has not been denounced or legally punished for his crime so far.

UCKG's activism and rhetoric around women's rights and domestic violence has grown because they want to offer a more spiritual and in this case, Pentecostal, alternative to secular, feminist-based activism. However, at issue here is not the fact that women are being offered a religious answer to domestic violence. For some women, this might be the right answer and might help them in relation to their situation of domestic violence. The problem lies in the fact that UCKG's religious services are sometimes being offered in lieu of State services and that religious services and State services are working together, ostensibly legitimising the religious services on offer. Moreover, with the incorporation of Project Rahab into the State *Women's Services Network* such as in Rio Grande do Sul, women could be directed to Project Rahab's services by the police.

No distinction is being made between secular, State help for domestic violence and Project Rahab's solution which involves conversion to Pentecostalism (this will be demonstrated clearly in the next section). The women that UCKG targets are generally low-income women with low levels of education. In this case, the women are being approached inside public institutions such as police stations and encouraged to attend religious services whose main

aim is to get the women to convert to Pentecostalism. This is taking advantage of women when they are at their most vulnerable.

7.2.3 The Construction of a Nation

Pentecostal churches have a strong focus on proselytizing and gaining more converts, which links to Macedo's ultimate aim of the construction of a nation. In a book entitled *Power Plan: God, Christians and Politics*⁵², Macedo and Oliveira (Macedo's former partner) highlight their plan to prepare the Church for an important and divine project: the creation of a nation. According to the authors, the book is aimed at enlightening readers about politics from a biblical stance and contributes to the political and democratic maturing of the country:

God has a great project of nation which he created and it is our responsibility to present it and put it into practice. In the Bible, in Genesis, God gives a lesson in the planning, organisation and execution of his idea. He clarifies his intention of State and the formation of a great nation. The essential objective of a politically organised society is to bring well-being to its citizens. The environment, the city and the State are always taken into account with a focus on the well-being of people (Macedo & Oliveira, *Plano de Poder: Deus, Os Cristãos e a Política*, 2008:15, translation by the author).

This quote serves to demonstrate that Macedo's vision for his Church and followers goes far beyond the walls of the Church institution itself and clearly extends into the public sphere through the focus on the creation of a nation. Macedo's vision for the nation is the reason

⁵² Translation by the author. The book is entitled '*Plano de Poder: Deus, Os Cristãos e a Política*' (2008) and currently there is no English version.

why the Church has a very active Third Sector agenda (Rosas, 2012) which is heavily publicized on its websites and inside its weekly newspaper *Folha Universal*. Importantly, research has demonstrated that the conversion of a woman often leads to the conversion of the rest of her family (Brusco, 1995; Mariz and Machado, 1997; Birman, 2007). This means that women are often the catalysts for a greater number of converts. During my fieldwork, on several occasions Bishop Macedo himself spoke of the importance of focusing on female conversion in order to bring in their families, demonstrating his awareness of the fact. Therefore, it is clear that the Church has a vested interest in addressing VAW: it is an issue that speaks to thousands of women and if they choose to convert they are likely to bring their family with them, leading to a greater number of converts.

Consistent with Prosperity Theology the Church runs business, finance and education programs, as well as offering a myriad of self-help programs from marriage counselling to drug rehabilitation. UCKG's target audience appears to be people tormented by problems, generally working class and poor people who are looking for ways to improve their lives (Almeida, 2009; Mariano, 1999). As such, the Church calls itself a 'Help Centre for Spiritual Guidance'. Once people begin to attend the Church, or are drawn in by the programs themselves, they also discover that these are usually targeted specifically at either men or women, such as the courses below.

Godllywood and Intellimen

Macedo's view of his Church's divine project to create a nation includes converting Brazilian men and women to Pentecostalism and shaping them as Pentecostal subjects: therefore, there is an important focus on men and women's gendered behaviour. In addition to Project

Rahab, Cristiane Cardoso and her husband, Bishop Renato Cardoso, have developed a myriad of highly gendered programs and courses focussing on how to be a man or a woman in modern-day Brazil.

They include weekly courses such as *Women's Moment (Momento Mulher)* or project *T-Amar*⁵³, aimed at young, single mothers as well as *Project Rahab (Projeto Raabe)* for women experiencing violence. Men and women are invited to attend *Bullet-Proof Marriage (Casamento Blindado)* and *Love Therapy (Terapia do Amor)*, conducted by the Cardosos. *Love Therapy* also appears on TV and radio with very little overt reference to the Church itself and is presented simply as an afternoon, self-help program. The Cardosos have even turned it into a best-selling book available on the high street, along with other best-selling books written for women by Cristiane Cardoso, such as *Better than Buying Shoes (Melhor do que Comprar Sapatos)* and *V(irtuous) Woman (Mulher V)*. All the meetings at UCKG aimed at women and girls come under the umbrella of *Godllywood*, a concept created by Cardoso in 2010 as “a reaction against the many unhealthy values propagated by Hollywood and our modern culture” (Godllywood, 2016). Recently, Cristiane Cardoso has created the *Godllywood School* for girls aged 6 to 14 where girls are taught a range of chores considered ‘female’ such as making beds, tidying, sewing, how to receive guests, as well as beauty and health regimes.

For men, Renato Cardoso has created the program *IntelliMen*. Their motto is “Making Men Better” (Universal, 2017) and is based on the premise that men are “disoriented, discontent and discredited” in the 21st century (ibid). At meetings and through challenges posted online,

⁵³ The name of the project T-Amar (Tamar) is a play on the words ‘*te amar*’ in Portuguese meaning to love yourself.

men are encouraged to become “better” and “humble” men of God (ibid). At *IntelliMen* meetings, men wear black T-shirts and are encouraged to post photographs on the internet circulating with their symbol: the *IntelliMan* ‘punch’ of intelligence. Strength is clearly associated with masculinity while at the women’s meetings, wives of bishops looking ultra-feminine in skirts, heels, make-up and styled hair, hold sessions explaining the so-called ‘natural’ differences between men and women.

Having addressed Project Rahab’s links with the State and its own interests beyond women’s rights, I will now turn to an analysis of the ways in which women attending the program are encouraged towards Pentecostal conversion and their process of subjectification into modern-day, gendered, Pentecostal subjects. I demonstrate this using Foucault’s concept of pastoral power, disciplinary technologies and the use of technologies of the self (Foucault, 2007 [2004] [1977-1978]), by examining the mentor/mentee relationships that are created between volunteers of Project Rahab and the women attending the project.

7.3 Pastoral Power and Spiritual Counsellors: Forming Relations of Permanent Obedience and Pentecostal Subjectivity

Drawing on the definition of pastoral power which I introduced in the methodology Chapter 3, Foucault likens pastoral power to an analogy of the relationship between a shepherd and his flock. Pastoral power is firstly “a relationship of submission of one individual to another” (2007:175) and a series of “continuous relations of care” (2007:176). These relations of care require a “series of relations of reciprocity between pastor and sheep” (ibid), that is, unconditional obedience from each member of the flock and the absolute commitment of the shepherd to each and every one of the sheep. Being accountable for the flock as a whole

and for each and every individual sheep, the shepherd needs individualised knowledge, gained through compulsory extraction of ‘truth’ and subjectification based on this ‘truth’ (2007: 175-185). According to Foucault, this pastoral form of individualised obedience is linked to the entire process of the history of individualisation in the West and the creation of the subject.

Pastoral power is therefore a subtle but still disciplinary form of governing individuals in which ‘relations of obedience’ are created through individualised knowledge about each and every member of the flock. Of relevance to this thesis is the work of Biebricher (2011), who used the concept of pastoral power to examine the growth of FBOs in the US, and focused on its effects through analysis of mentor/mentee relationships with former and current drug-users. I therefore apply Biebricher’s analysis of mentor/mentee relationships to the situation of Project Rahab volunteers and battered women.

7.3.1 Spiritual Counsellors and Mentor/Mentee Relationships

At Project Rahab, battered women were assigned a ‘spiritual counsellor’. This is someone who reinforces UCKG’s religious teachings and their importance in relation to the woman’s current situation. These counsellors may or may not be someone who has experienced IPV themselves. Importantly, though, they are people who have converted to Pentecostalism within UCKG. Further, the spiritual counsellors are women in whom the abused women confide their troubles and hence, these counsellors essentially become mentors to the women.

Transposing Biebricher's (2011) analysis of former drug-users as mentors and current drug-users as mentees, the mentors make the women talk and reveal the 'truth' about themselves (their intimate problems of IPV). The mentors, supposedly, but not always former victims of violence, will draw on their own experiences in their mentoring. The authority of the mentor rests on their own experience and the fact that they have overcome deep pain and trauma through faith and religious conversion. A mentoring relationship is formed based on the mentee being willing to disclose personal information and the mentor working out of a sense of duty to 'serve' (Biebricher, 2011). This is a clear example of Foucault's analogy that within pastorship, "one obeys in order to be obeyed" (Foucault, 2007:177). The mentor obeys the pastor and the mentee obeys the mentor. In this form of faith-based mentoring, the mentors and the pastor are able to govern the individual (the abused woman) and her soul. The development of the mentor-mentee relationship creates the links of 'networks of obedience' formed in accordance with the extraction of truth (Biebricher, 2011). The women who attend Project Rahab are therefore subjected to relations of permanent obedience and subjectified as victims who can change *only if* they find God and convert. For this reason, the women were told:

The objective of this course, the Inner Cure, is to open you up to a new lease of life. Of course, above all our proposal is faith, because we all know that without faith we don't get anywhere in life. Everyone here has tried to hide, tried to fight, tried to change, tried to transform the situation they are in but they haven't been able to, because with strength alone it isn't possible. The moment that we accept God and give ourselves up to Him, that's when everything can be done differently (Karina, Bishop's Wife, PR Meeting, 8/3/2015).

Although one could argue that submission to God and Church is about community, Foucault explains that it is within this modern matrix of individualisation (i.e. the Welfare State, and in this example, within UCKG) that the person is made into a subject. UCKG argues that Project Rahab has been created due to the perceived failure of other institutions, especially State institutions, at helping battered women. However, over and above secular services, the Church believes that women experiencing violence are in need of spiritual and moral guidance which they offer through faith-based mentoring. Moreover, using powerful slogans such as *Your past needn't influence your future* or *You can't change your past, but you can draw strength from it* or *The strength of a woman* (all expressed in books, on websites and in Project Rahab sessions), Project Rahab appears to offer potential converts a new way of envisioning their lives. This is consistent with the Pentecostal belief that through conversion you are 'reborn', meaning that they are offering an appealing cure from pain to abused women. This is evident in this speech by one of the Project Rahab leaders:

In this place, with our God, we start over. Women arrive here and are accepted as they are. If you are willing to expose yourselves in front of God and those who want to help you [Project Rahab mentors] then yes, we can pull out these rotten weeds, get rid of this dirty water and fill ourselves with clean water in order to carry on. When facing a life transformation, it doesn't matter if you're 12 or 72. If it's your moment to awaken, then Amen. You can't look backwards because otherwise you can't move forwards. This is the aim of the course. We are gathered here to talk to God... if we are here it's because God brought us here. Nothing that has happened before matters, because the past will be reverted... Life is transformed, there is no pain, there is no suffering... through faith we will achieve victory by giving up our selves, each and every one of us. God speaks to us and shows us what the Lord wants and what we have to do (Karina, Bishop's Wife, PR Meeting, 8/3/2015).

Battered women are given the remarkably tempting offer that if they “expose themselves in front of God and those who want to help them” – that is, if they tell the truth about their situation – they will be spiritually saved and spared from violence and pain. Foucault argued that the shepherd was responsible for each and every one of his flock of sheep, as a whole and individually (Foucault, 2007 [2004]). In this case, Project Rahab sees itself as responsible for *all women*, and for each and every individual woman who comes through their doors. In exchange for truth and obedience, the shepherd will look after each and every one of the sheep. This is underscored when Karina says “we will achieve victory by giving up our *selves, each and every one of us*”. And in order to give up their selves, as well as to be obedient, the women must accept that a life transformation is necessary. This is very attractive to some women who have been living in pain and suffering. A life transformation means a complete break with their current way of understanding and experiencing their life, and a new life in which they convert fully to Pentecostalism and learn to live and behave and think as a Pentecostal woman must. The process of subjectification as a Pentecostal is essentially a never-ending process of a relation of obedience.

The Powerful Testimony of Converts

In addition to personal counsellors and mentors who use a variety of discursive techniques to draw the women into Pentecostal subjectivity, the women are also encouraged into this process by the testimony of ‘witnesses’. Every session, women listen to the stories of other abused women who had found salvation through God and conversion. There are never any opportunities for discussion without the theme of conversion. This is a highly visible and public form of ‘truth-telling’ or ‘extraction of truth’ common in Pentecostal Churches. ‘Witnesses’ (*testemunhos*) who are converts themselves, ‘testify’ to the audience with their

personal stories. In this case, during the Project Rahab sessions, witnesses (UCKG members and Project Rahab volunteers), stood up to talk about the positive changes in their lives since attending the project and their religious conversion. Below are two examples of women's testimonies:

Witness 1: I would like to share with you the story of the conquest I achieved here, in the Solomon Temple. From the age of 7 I was raped and abused by my brother. My mother didn't know about it and I went on to have a life of suffering. I had cancer, but thank God it has disappeared now and I don't have anything. So, what happened to me? I became a prostitute and I drank a lot. I slept with a bottle by my side. Every day, I woke up, drank and took cocaine. Today I sing God's praises because now I live a religion that is sanctified in my heart. I got out of the gutter. When I came here, I wasn't discriminated against like I was every day in society. God gave me an opportunity, gave me love. I didn't know what peace was, I had no love from anybody. But when you come here, you receive love and attention. God gave me another option and I'm thankful for every moment. I've been here for a year and a half now, in Project Rahab and at the meetings I've learned so much (PR Meeting, 8/3/2015).

Witness 2: The Inner Cure course came just at the right time. It's very powerful because I learned how to become a great woman of God. I'm also part of project T-amar where we learn to be virtuous women, courageous, strong and dedicated... It's not easy to raise a child alone, but I learned to look inside myself, not to put myself down. At Universal [UCKG] I found God, and I'm very grateful because it's something inexplicable to have the Holy Spirit inside you. (PR Meeting, 8/3/2015).

These stories or 'testimonies' serve as powerful examples to the women as to what their lives could be like if they chose to convert to Pentecostalism. The themes are uniting for women who have experienced different forms of violence such as abuse, rape, abandonment and

being forced to raise a child alone, as well as illness and turning to drugs and alcohol as crutches. For abused women, these testimonies serve as evidence of a potential life with no pain: miserable and abused women, ignored or vilified by society are taken in, loved, counselled, and cared for. Society is often disparaging of women who work in prostitution, or single mothers who are deemed irresponsible. UCKG is therefore rupturing forms of symbolic and normative violence that are practised invisibly and sometimes visibly against these women. However, these testimonies reinforce the concept of submission and subjectification within a Pentecostal framework. Negative aspects and ailments in a woman's life appear to only be cured (e.g. being healed from cancer) *if* the woman accepts Jesus as her saviour and converts, reinforcing the importance of the mentor/mentee relationships and the relationship of obedience.

7.4 Overcoming Domestic Strife: Project Rahab's 'Technologies of the Self'

As I attended the various sessions being offered by UCKG, talked to Project Rahab volunteers, and read Bishop Macedo's and Cardoso's books on what it meant to be a woman, I built up a picture of the way in which Project Rahab understood and explained domestic violence, and their practical solutions for overcoming marital strife. These were exclusively focused on the women themselves, and included ideas such as women not valuing themselves by not being feminine enough, not caring enough about their appearance and being overemotional. In addition, women were blamed for haranguing and irritating their husbands, expecting too much from them and being responsible for their husband's failure to listen to God (and hence convert to Pentecostalism). While the primary solution lay in conversion to Pentecostalism,

women attending the course were simultaneously educated and subjectified into the ideal, modern-day, Pentecostal woman-subject. This included understanding how newer forms of gender relations caused friction within intimate relationships and a racialized focus on a white, Westernised ideal of beauty as well as the adoption of UCKG's philosophy of *Rational Love*, in which emotions are controlled and circumscribed. Below I examine each of these aspects:

7.4.1 Domestic Conflict, Changing Gender Roles and Negotiating Gendered Aspects of 'Tradition' and Modernity

Silvia, one of the Project Rahab coordinators explained to me: "The first thing we do when we talk to a woman is work out what she is doing wrong, or what she could be doing better, in order not to antagonize her husband". This clearly demonstrates an interpretation of IPV which blames the victim and against which feminists have been campaigning hard to overcome. As explained in Chapter 2, in the last 30 years, Brazil has experienced dramatic gender role change, as economic and social development have led to more girls than boys finishing university, more women forming part of the labour force than in most European countries and women now have far less children than they used to (World Bank Report, 2013). This has been a destabilising process and research suggests that IPV can increase in times of gender role instability (for example Strauss, 1993; Yllö, 1993).

At UCKG, VAW was often characterised in terms of domestic conflict linked to this gender role change and the expectations women placed on men to take on tasks deemed 'traditionally female', such as domestic chores. According to UCKG, women needed to understand that they were men's assistants in life, which is also why a Pentecostal woman should be

submissive to her husband, who is the head of the family and the decision-maker. Maria, a Project Rahab volunteer summarised it like this:

The point of the word “submission” is just that: it’s a ‘sub’ mission. A woman’s mission is to help her husband realise his dreams, to be the assistant and helper in his life, on his path. The saying that behind every strong man is a strong woman is true. The woman’s role is to be there for her husband. Nowadays, she often has a job and that’s fine, but it’s also up to her to sort out the home, her husband shouldn’t have to worry about any of that (Maria, PR volunteer, 12/04/2015).

UCKG’s neo-Pentecostal Prosperity Theology with its focus on accumulation of wealth and project of social ascension means that women in the Church are encouraged to work and study. However, their most important duties are at home. In addition, according to Cristiane Cardoso, modern women have lost their ‘femininity’ due to changing gender relations. For example, in her book *V Woman* (2013), Cardoso uses the categories of traditional and modern in order to construct a contemporary image of femininity based on a conservative and imaginary ideology of the past. Under the title *Modern, in a Traditional Style*⁵⁴ she links the idea of ‘tradition’ to women’s ‘value’ and modernity is linked to women’s loss of so-called ‘value’:

A long time ago, women were respected and honoured. A man’s reputation depended on his marriage to a maiden. We were a prize to be conquered. The way in which we dressed, talked and carried ourselves said everything. We were exclusive. We were attractive because of our discreteness, not because of our clothes. Certainly, women will say that women of the past didn’t have most of the things

⁵⁴ Title translated by author, original title in Portuguese: *A Mulher V: Moderna, à Moda Antiga*, by Cristiane Cardoso (2013).

we have now, and they are right; but one thing they had that we don't have today and that's value. They were valued. We might have won a lot in the last few decades, but we have also lost a lot. We feel like objects that have lost their value, become cheap, common and unimportant (Cardoso, 2013:11).

Cardoso's argument is a form of 'invented tradition'⁵⁵. It is doubtful that any poor, black women ever lived in a time where women could be discreet or exclusive. Cardoso uses advances achieved for women through feminism such as rights and greater equality to construct a vision of a more conservative but modern alternative. This links in to Merry's (2001) argument that religious responses to women's rights are often formed in opposition to secular, rights-based discourses. For example, Cardoso uses symbols such as *International Women's Day* to suggest that women's desire for equality means they have lost their sense of 'value':

The first time I heard that there was an International Day for Women, I immediately asked myself – why isn't there an International day for Men? Regardless of the history behind this day, the truth is that sadly, women always need 'something more' in order to feel valued. It's as though nothing were enough, it seems that a woman's self-esteem is always working against her. And the more she invests in herself, the more unsatisfied she becomes [...] (Cardoso, 2013:1, translation the author).

Using categories of 'tradition' and modernity in order to negotiate gendered behaviour links strongly into Plesset's (2006) research on battered women in Parma, Italy. In her study of two refuge centres for battered women (one secular and feminist; one Catholic), Plesset (2006)

⁵⁵ see Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*, CUP.

argues that locals used the categories of tradition and modernity “as rhetorical strategies to negotiate gender relations and gender change” (6). Plesset argues that just as modernity includes gendered processes, so understandings of gender are used by the State and local actors to symbolise and make sense of modernity (2006:5).

Therefore, according to Plesset, violence against women is either blamed on old-fashioned and ‘traditional’ understandings of masculinity or on new and ‘modern’ forms of gender relations. In both cases, the focus is on societal understandings of gender which emphasise collective, rather than individual responsibility (p5). Plesset’s theory is therefore very helpful in demonstrating how Project Rahab and UCKG use not only the category of gender, but also categories of ‘tradition’ and modernity in order to reinforce their message that the root cause of VAW is due to modern-day gendered roles and relations. Plesset’s theory links into the subjectification of abused women at Project Rahab because women learn to collectively identify modern forms of gender relations as the problem. However, the simultaneous process of individualisation and submission makes the violence experienced each woman’s individual problem.

In UCKG and Project Rahab, restoring women’s self-respect and self-esteem involves encouraging them to act and speak according to certain ‘feminine’ norms and to find joy in domestic tasks. Women are encouraged to be submissive to their partners but to find strength and joy in this submission, and in their femininity which is naturalised in its opposition to masculinity. This is suggested from the outset, on Project Rahab’s website:

At Project Rahab, women re-encounter something called self-respect. They realise that they are feminine, that they need to look after themselves, improve their self-esteem – they realise, essentially, that they are women, without competition between the sexes which, in truth, devalues both sides inside and outside of the home. Men and women find that they are partners, and not adversaries in a domestic war (Godllywood, 2016, translation the author).

This text highlights how the Church links gender roles and gendered behaviour to men and women's biological, sex-based roles, making them appear natural. Domestic strife is subtly linked to women's growing demands that men take on more responsibility inside the home. The concept of self-respect is linked to 'traditional' ideas of femininity and beauty routines. The message is that once these 'feminine' norms are (re)-introduced, women rediscover self-respect through their 'natural-born' duties and domestic problems are reduced.

7.4.2 Technology of the Self: Femininity and (White) Beauty

Women at UCKG are given classes with emphasis on techniques of self-care, such as eating a healthy diet, and the importance of exercise and beauty routines. These routines include using make-up, wearing feminine clothes (i.e. heels and skirts) and always having painted nails⁵⁶. One of the Project Rahab volunteers explained to me:

A woman always needs to look good. I do the washing up with gloves on so that my nail polish doesn't chip, I have my hair nicely done, and makeup ready so I'm ready to run out the door at a moment's notice and still look perfect! (Renata, PR Volunteer, 16/05/2015).

⁵⁶ In Brazil, nail-painting is relatively inexpensive and strongly linked to cultural standards of beauty. A woman who has her nails painted is considered to be a woman who looks after herself, which is culturally linked to a sign of self-respect. Therefore, many Brazilian women have their nails done up to once or even twice a week.

In addition, the focus on beauty has strongly white, Western overtones and black features such as Afro hair are not considered acceptable. At one Project Rahab session, we were told:

Women need to take pride in themselves, so many women... well, they don't look after themselves. Their hair should be nicely done, straightened, especially for those with frizzy, Afro hair [*cabelo crespo*], their nails painted ... even someone who doesn't have much money can find ways to make themselves look good! (PR meeting notes, 12/04/2015).

Brazil is a country where beauty is taken very seriously, evidenced by its status as a country with one of the highest levels of plastic surgery in the world (Edmonds, 2010). It should be noted here that the racial aspect of straightening Afro hair is strongly linked to Brazil's historical legacy of a colonial slave culture in which Africans were considered undesirable elements of Brazilian society (see Chapter 2). Brazil's colonial past, with its history of slavery, classism and racism, has led to the valuing of what is considered 'European' or 'Western' beauty such as white skin and blond hair, and has constructed black features as negative and ugly (Edmonds, 2010; Goldstein, 2003; Parker, 1991). Therefore, black features such as Afro hair are disliked, and women are encouraged to accept norms of beauty where straight hair is seen as desirable. This is not just a discourse that arises in UCKG, but is in fact a common discourse in Brazil itself and many black and mixed-race Brazilian women straighten their hair, as demonstrated in the conversations of abused women at the *Women's Collective* in Chapter 4.

UCKG therefore appears to promote a strongly Western concept of beauty, visible through the images of women on the UCKG and Project Rahab websites, which only show images of

very attractive, white, Western-looking women with long and straight, brown or blond hair. Even the tips given for cutting or managing hair are for women with shoulder-length, straight hair. Cristiane Cardoso, who regularly posts selfies of herself and her outfits, is the foremost representative of this look. With white skin and highlighted blonde hair, she presents the epitome of a young, stylish, professional, and *modest*, Westernised look.

Women at Project Rahab were encouraged to straighten their hair, either by saving up to have it done in a salon or even by using an iron at home, because as one Project Rahab volunteer put it: “we just don’t need frizzy Afro hair, do we ladies?”. This was explained during a Project Rahab meeting in which the focus was on the importance of beauty norms and techniques of self-care, which were seen as strategies for mitigating domestic strife in the home. Linked to the concept of lost ‘femininity’ above was the idea that modern women no longer ‘looked after themselves well’. The implicit message was that this contributed to ‘domestic strife’. Therefore, gendered domestic relations could be improved through increased ‘femininity’ (attention to beauty regimes) which simultaneously improved women’s self-esteem by ‘taking pride in themselves’, while helping to decrease ‘domestic strife’.

However, this had the effect of making women responsible for ‘domestic strife’, as it was linked to their lack of attention to beauty routines and ‘femininity’. In addition, the message reinforced the socio-cultural denigration of black features such as Afro hair, white promoting white, Western norms of beauty. As I attended other sessions such as *Women’s Moment*, I began to perceive that *all* the women with Afro hair had it straightened, which demonstrates a general level of acceptance for this form of racialized, hierarchical, normative violence. The existence of this cultural-historical, normative violence within a Church that attracts

predominantly low-income and non-white members, demonstrates further intersecting processes of subjectification that poor, abused, and especially black and mixed-race women experience within Project Rahab.

The images of white femininity and beauty were found in the advertising flyers for Project Rahab, featuring images of white-skinned, model-like, supposedly ‘beautiful’ (Western-looking) women who experienced violence, but these images did not fit the profile of the women attending UCKG and Project Rahab (see Figures 15, 16 and 17).

Figure 15 Invite (flyer) to Project Rahab Meeting



Source: Scan of flyer collected by the author in São Paulo. The flyer reads “Make-up does not fix the marks inside. Come and discover something that can change your life”

Figure 16 Invite (flyer) to the Inner Cure Course



Source: Scan of flyer collected by the author in São Paulo. The flyer reads: "It is with great pleasure we invite you to our special meeting, Theme: Inner Cure. Your presence is a great honour!"

Figure 17 Invite (flyer) to Projects T-Amar and Project Rahab



Source: Scan of flyer collected by the author in São Paulo. The flyer explains the time and location of the meetings.

In UCKG's programs, the 'performance' (Butler, 1990) of gender is therefore constantly instilled and repeated through a focus on ways of speaking, learning and experiencing the body. In a study of social media and UCKG, Teixeira (2014) points out that gender performativity is strengthened through the circulation of 'selfies' and images on the internet. Women and girls are encouraged to take part in activities that demonstrated their femininity,

their love of God and their family. These include wearing 'feminine' outfits, beauty regimes and tidying their homes. Women and girls are encouraged to take photos of themselves and the task and post it on social media (as are the men in courses such as *Intellimen*). While providing evidence of task completion, the images also allow for the transformation of the female body into that of a 'virtuous' body (Teixeira, 2014). This also socialises men and women into gendered behaviour that is understood as consistent with their 'natural' gender. Linked to Foucault, these disciplinary techniques of self-care form part of the subjectification of women as obedient and docile (and racialized) bodies.

7.4.3 Technology of the Self: Rational Love

Finally, an important concept specific to UCKG itself is the idea of *Rational Love*. Women's emotions were considered to be their greatest weakness. At one Women's Moment meeting, Edir Macedo himself came to address the women and explain the problem with women's emotions:

Women are too emotional. God doesn't speak to your heart, he speaks to your brain and your spirit, not your soul. Women struggle with this. Decisions mustn't be based on what you feel, on instinct, which is linked to the heart, you must make decisions based on intellect, the brain, which is linked to God (Edir Macedo, Women's Moment Meeting, 04/05/2015).

Macedo used this explanation to justify men's positions of superiority in the Church and within the diocese. Macedo explained that although women have a sensitivity towards religion and were generally the ones to encourage their family to go to Church, it was men

who had a stronger and better relationship with God, because they understood and could interpret His plan for the world.

Throughout the *Inner Cure* course, a strong focus was given to the concept of Rational Love, which was defined as intelligent and not emotional love. In fact, according to UCKG, relationships based emotional love were bound for failure. Leaders at Project Rahab said that women's emotions and lack of rationality caused them to throw themselves at any man who showed them a bit of attention and affection. This went some way towards explaining the impression I gained that volunteers at Project Rahab sometimes appeared to have little sympathy for many women whom they felt had thrown themselves at the first man who came along. "God will allow this to happen, if she wants to get married, then God allows it, but then she must live with what she has chosen" said Josefina, a Project Rahab volunteer.

The concept of Rational Love gave Project Rahab volunteers a certain steeliness in their one-to-one talks with women who came for advice on domestic violence. "We're not going to treat them like children and say, 'oh you poor thing, that's terrible' when they come to us. God only puts what we can handle in our paths. These women have the skills inside themselves to improve their situation, as long as they have God in their hearts" said Silvia, a Project Rahab coordinator. Silvia explained that a woman should see herself as a jewel who was not going to throw herself at any man. This would make the man realise that he had to work hard to get her and if he did not, "he wasn't worth it anyway and she will have saved herself from a worthless man". It is important to note that there was no discourse at the project regarding men as perpetrators of violence.

By converting to UCKG's brand of Pentecostalism and giving themselves over to God, women are offered a vision of a rational and emotionally-controlled technique of dealing with their day to day problems.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents empirical evidence and analysis of UCKG's *Project Rahab* for abused women. It underscores the close links between Project Rahab and State services for battered women, such as the practice of volunteering in female police stations in order to direct women to the course, as well as the approximation of Project Rahab within the *Women's Services Network* in the State of *Rio Grande do Sul*. Project Rahab bases its discourse on the Maria da Penha Law, giving vocal and visible support to women's right not to suffer violence.

This chapter shows that there are important gendered implications within the secular/religious interplay in the provision of public social services. Project Rahab is being incorporated into State services due to the State's growing reliance on FBOs to offer 'public' services. In a 'blurring' of State and Project Rahab services, the same support network is offered within the project, including help and advice from social workers, psychologists and lawyers. The important difference is the solution that Project Rahab offers for domestic violence: religious conversion to the UCKG brand of Pentecostalism. While well-meaning and linked to the Pentecostal focus of proselytizing, I have also demonstrated that there are other sides to this conversion. The Church has a political project aimed at the creation of a (Pentecostal) nation, and focusing on women brings in higher numbers of converts as

women's conversion often leads to the conversion of their families. Going into secular spaces such as police stations at a time when women are extremely vulnerable is seen by the Church as offering much-needed help, but is also linked to the Church's agenda of Pentecostal conversion. Therefore, this is taking advantage of women at a difficult time.

UCKG links gender roles and gendered behaviour to men and women's biological, sex-based roles, making them appear natural. Domestic strife is subtly linked to women's growing demands that men take on more responsibility inside the home. Therefore, women are taught that IPV can be solved by re-negotiating gender roles and relations in which women are encouraged to find joy through submission and taking full responsibility for the domestic sphere, thereby removing expectations on men and women are taught to temper their emotions through the Church's concept of *Rational Love*.

Once the women attend the *Inner Cure* course, their process of subjectification and socialisation into becoming a UCKG Pentecostal woman begins. Using Foucault's concept of pastoral power, this chapter demonstrates the strength of mentor/mentee relationships which gently bind the women into permanent relations of obedience. In addition, women are subject to powerful discourse and testimonies from converts on the joy of religious conversion as a solution to their (gender-based) problems.

Simultaneously, the women are taught techniques of self-care, including the importance beauty regimes, which contain strong racialized overtones promoting white, Western beauty and feeding into cultural-historical hierarchies of race and class, which view black features as undesirable. In a Church whose main audience is composed of poor and low-income citizens

who are predominantly non-white, this demonstrates further processes of control and subjectification from hierarchical, racialized perspectives. The promotion of white beauty standards to black and mixed-race women instils feelings of shame of the women's own physical appearance. This suggests to the women that their biologically given body is not enough, meaning that this is not only about self-care in terms of dress, but about making women believe that what they are and how they look is inferior. This is a very powerful emotion with which to control women and links into literature on the concept of shame as a function of oppression (e.g. see Ggola, 2015; Plesset, 2006).

Moreover, advances in women's rights gained through feminism are used in order to construct a contemporary image of femininity based on a conservative and imaginary ideology of the past. Cardoso uses the categories of traditional and modern by linking the idea of 'tradition' to women's 'value' and modernity is linked to women's loss of so-called 'value' in a form of 'invented tradition' which describes a time in the past when "women" were respected and honoured. Again, the concept of self-respect is linked to 'traditional' ideas of femininity and beauty routines that include strong racist undertones, suggesting that women's blackness is one of the unruly things that needs to be self-controlled and mitigated. The message is that once these white(r) 'feminine' norms are (re)-introduced, women rediscover self-respect through their 'natural-born' duties, and domestic problems are reduced. However, these 'natural-born' duties are based on the white, middle-class/elite ideal of female seclusion and raising of children, as well as responsibility for the domestic sphere, something that most low-income, black women have never been able to do. This continues to imply white, gendered and class-based superiority to black and mixed-race women, who must modify their personal lacunae.

Therefore, the 'white' woman ideal is important, suggesting that race, in particular women's race, is partly to blame for the violence. If only women were more traditional, more feminine and *less black*. The racial aspect is therefore highly relevant because it suggests: a) addressing the problem of violence through de-racialisation (i.e. making people less black) and, b) disciplining blackness through shame. I therefore argue that race therefore becomes a disciplining tool, just as much as gender.

The analysis of Project Rahab leads me to the conclusion that UCKG is using the issue of VAW as a vehicle for gaining more converts and as a challenge towards newer and more modern patterns of gendered relations, with strongly racialized overtones, which the Church views as responsible for 'domestic strife' (i.e. IPV). Abused women's suffering and the help or cure for pain offered by Project Rahab become tools through which to gain religious converts, who are simultaneously subjectified into UCKG's version of the 'correct' way to be a (whiter) woman in Brazil today. In conjunction with Macedo's political aims for the Church, the focus on women links to their roles as potential catalysts for further, family conversion. Therefore, this focus on women is also about societal change and is clearly strongly political.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION: FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY, DISCIPLINARY INSTITUTIONS AND THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE

8.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the findings of this study. It discusses the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this research, and recommends potential avenues of future research. In this concluding chapter I bring together data from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 and build on my use of the theme of pastoral power introduced in Chapter 7. I use Foucault's analysis of the spread of pastoral power into the secular sphere and within institutions of the Welfare State, in order to examine power relations in the *Family Alliance* and the *Women's Collective*, in the same way as I examined power relations in Project Rahab in Chapter 7. This is so that I can examine the ways in which social welfare provision affects women's sense of subjectivity and can also have an impact on State provision of women's rights. Drawing on literature from Foucault (1991 [1975]) and Merry (2001), I theorise organisations addressing IPV as disciplinary centres which mediate and construct women's subjectivity, through pervasive, disciplinary forms of pastoral power and technologies of the self.

Furthermore, I argue that Brazil's high levels of interpersonal violence allows us to see how different beliefs around gender roles and relations – linked, in this case, to traditional, conservative Catholic and Pentecostal beliefs around gender on the one hand, and feminist interpretations of gender on the other hand – create different interpretations of the root

causes and impacts of violence, occurring both in private and in public. I argue that this 'blurring' of gender-based violence occurring in different spaces allows the organisations under study to lay blame and responsibility for violence on some members of society while excusing others, which simultaneously means that addressing VAW allows organisations to either politicise or depoliticise violence. It is one of my findings in this thesis that the debates over who is to blame for violence affect the ways in which violence – including 'domestic' and 'urban' violence – are perceived. Moreover, these perceptions are heavily gendered. Therefore, the solutions offered to abused women in centres addressing violence link into contrasting views on the role of women in society and highlights that addressing VAW is highly political as it links into the control of women in society.

The chapter is set out as follows: in Section 8.2 I examine centres addressing IPV as disciplinary institutions (Foucault, 1991, [1975]) which use the subtle form of pastoral power as a technology to encourage women from low-income suburbs to think and act in certain ways. Next, in Section 8.3 I address Merry's (2001) argument that disciplinary institutions focus on the construction of modern forms of subjectivity through technologies of the self and I demonstrate the forms of technologies of the self that are found in all 3 centres under study. In Section 8.4, I demonstrate the ways in which the different centres under study use their different understandings of gendered roles and relations in order to lay blame on either women or men for various forms of violence, including both domestic and urban forms of violence, creating a direct link between the two. Finally, in Section 8.5 I provide the final conclusion for this thesis.

8.2 Domestic Violence Centres as Modern Disciplinary Institutions

8.2.1 Disciplinary Institutions

In one of his most famous books, *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault argues that the prison became the preferred method of punishment in Western society, because it linked to the emergence of a 'disciplinary society': certain ways of acting upon, and training the body and behaviour, so that individuals who make up the population can be easily controlled (Foucault, 1991 [1975]). According to Foucault, disciplinary power first began to develop in earnest at the end of the 18th century onwards, first in the army and in school, and was then quickly applied to hospitals, factories and prisons. Foucault cites the example of the rifle in the army at the end of the 17th century as one of the reasons for the emergence of disciplinary techniques. Beyond being strong, soldiers now had to be taught how to use the rifle correctly, how to co-ordinate their movements as a group and to respond instantly on command (Foucault, 1991 [1975]:138). Foucault describes these new mass forms of training bodies, gestures and behaviours as a 'political anatomy' aimed at producing 'docile bodies' whose economic and social usefulness could be maximised (ibid).

Foucault argues that forms of sovereign power (the older form of power that Foucault identified) became less and less efficient in regulating the behaviour of populations in Europe towards the end of the 18th century, leading to the development of new techniques of control (ibid:102). Foucault describes discipline as a 'technology' aimed at:

How to keep someone under surveillance, how to control his conduct, his behaviour, his aptitudes, how to improve his performance, multiply his capacities, how to put him where he is most useful: that

is discipline in my sense (Foucault, 1981: 191 quoted in O'Farrell, 2005: 102).

Relating this to the thesis at hand, and following Foucault (1991 [1975]), Westlund (1999) argues that institutions which help battered women, including shelters, counselling services, psychiatric and medical professions, the police and courts – and therefore centres such as the *Family Alliance* and, *Project Rahab* and the *Women's Collective* – are what Foucault would consider to be modern, disciplinary institutions. This is because once women enter these institutions, they are placed within new and different sets of power relations located somewhere along “the great carceral continuum” (Westlund, 1999:1049).

Pastoral Power in Secular Institutions

Foucault argues that power is not owned by the State, but instead the State relies on a large network of co-operation of local and individualised tactics of power in which everybody is involved (O'Farrell, 2005). Power is therefore a relation between individuals and groups at different levels, working together and against each other in constantly shifting combinations (e.g. fathers towards their children, men towards women, children in relation to parents and women in relation to men, etc.). In his well-known book the *History of Sexuality* (Volume 1, 1998 [1976]), Foucault notes that confessing the details of one's own life means that a person is more susceptible to being ensnared in and manipulated by networks of power (1998: 59-63). For example, in Chapter 7, by focusing on the relations of power and processes of subjectification between mentors and mentees in the program, I demonstrated how Foucault's concept of pastoral power (Foucault, 2007 [2004] [1977-1978]) functioned as a

subtle form of disciplinary power, in which women were gently coerced into modern-day, Pentecostal subjectivity.

However, as I explained in Chapter 4, Foucault's concept of pastoral power is also helpful in secular contexts, as he describes pastoral power as a technique that passed from religious to secular spheres through the growth and spread of the Welfare State. Therefore, pastoral power has often been used in the analysis of secular, social, health and educational settings (e.g. Schutz, 2005; Caughlan, 2005; Cole, 2011; Cook & Brunton, 2015). As I described in Chapter 4, according to Caughlan (2005), the appropriation of pastoral techniques by secular institutions means that the focus is no longer placed on salvation in the next world, but instead on health and wellbeing in this world. However, the rhetoric of redemption is still retained. In secular institutions, the agents of pastoral power multiply to include the police, social workers, health-care workers and teachers, who act to govern by "structuring the possible field of action" of those in their care (Foucault, 1983:221 in Caughlan, 2005:15). The language of psychology replaces the language of religion, but it allows particular ways of thinking, self-reflection and self-regulation (Caughlan, 2005).

As arms of the Welfare State, both the *Women's Collective* and the *Family Alliance* have professional staff (social workers and psychologists), trained to help battered women deal with the situations of violence they are experiencing. The professionals can therefore be considered state-sanctioned agents of pastoral power, who structure the possible fields of action of their service users (i.e. abused women), by teaching the women ways of thinking, of reflecting and self-regulating in what is essentially a modern, disciplinary setting. At the *Women's Collective* and the *Family Alliance*, the disciplinary nature of the institutions

becomes visible when one considers that once women begin using the services, they must abide by certain rules and regulations, and come under scrutiny of the professionals. When a woman arrives at either of the centres, personal information is extracted from her such as her name, age, marital status, religion and the personal and intimate history of violence she has been experiencing. Often traumatised and frightened, she is now in a position of having to build up a relationship of trust with the 'experts' (the professionals at the centre) by telling her story. The battered women – almost always from the surrounding low-income, disadvantaged and violent neighbourhoods – have little initial understanding of the centre's philosophy towards violence, gender roles or strategies for dealing with violence. The women simply have to trust that the state-sanctioned agents will offer them the advice and help they need, while becoming part of the Welfare State, which is itself a network of power.

Shaping Female Participation

In Foucauldian terms, the 'truth-telling' and revealing of personal information to social welfare professionals in the centres is similar to the Christian strategy of 'confession' to a priest (in Catholicism) or the revealing of personal information to Project Rahab mentors (see Chapter 7), which is part of the Pentecostal practice of 'testifying' to one's change since conversion. In both the *Women's Collective* and the *Family Alliance* during the group therapy sessions, the service users and the professionals sat in a circle and discussed a theme such as the Brazilian legal definition of 'domestic violence'. Speaking techniques were introduced to allow one woman at a time to speak without being interrupted. This included using an object which gave the person holding it the authority to speak while everyone else had to be quiet. It was clear that women were being taught to listen respectfully to one another and only speak when it was their turn.

Schutz (2004) suggests that “pastoral forms of control often co-opt individual and group agency” (2004:15). Schutz compared traditional classrooms with row-seating and progressive classrooms set up in circles. While students appeared to have more ‘freedom’ and be able to interact more creatively and critically with each other, Schutz argues that the students and teacher are effectively monitoring each other and teaching “the *correct* way to participate” (2004:15). According to Schutz, although pastoral settings appear to foster creativity compared to traditional classroom settings, control is essentially distributed throughout the environment, instead of located in an identifiable figure or system, and therefore “it is extremely difficult for participants to detect or resist” (2004:15). In both the *Women’s Collective* and the *Family Alliance* it was clear that the women were encouraged to monitor each other while simultaneously being taught the ‘correct’ way to interact with each other, demonstrating the functioning of pastoral power and discipline in both centres.

Power and Space

Foucault also describes how space is used in particular ways in order to facilitate mechanisms of power (O’Farrell, 2005). This begins with the principle of ‘enclosure’ which locks people away in institutional spaces: criminals in prisons, children in school, workers in factories (ibid). Smaller partitions exist in these enclosures, such as cells, classrooms, dormitories and hospital wards. These divisions require specially designed architecture to physically maintain these organised spaces. The division of space within the *Women’s Collective* and the *Family Alliance* led to some interesting differences: at the *Family Alliance*, a clear hierarchy existed and the professional staff remained courteous but aloof, physically separated from the service users in their offices, while the women sat in the main reception until their session began. The staff interacted with the service users only when they had to and only in their professional

capacity. Therefore, even the silence between staff and service users except during meetings created a sense of division.

In addition, the formality of the interactions between the staff and service users clearly distinguished the staff as 'experts' and the service users as having 'problems' that needed solving with the expertise of the staff. During the group therapy sessions, women were constantly reminded not to tell anyone about the location of the centre or that they were service users. They were told not to talk to women in the street whom they might recognise from the centre. On the one hand, this was important due to the very personal nature of the therapy in the centre. However, it is possible that this discourse of secrecy, the focus on IPV as a personal rather than collective problem, and the occasional presence of men entering for mediation, created an invisible barrier between the women themselves. As they arrived and sat waiting for their appointments, the women nodded respectfully to one another, but talked little to each other, wrapped up in their own private pain.

This was noticeably different at the *Women's Collective*, where the staff and service users intermingled in the communal spaces, partly due to more limited office space. This increased interaction and allowed for impromptu discussions between staff and service users, leading to a different atmosphere at the centre. Unlike the *Family Alliance* where women were told to keep attendance a secret, the staff encouraged the service users to invite other women to the centre. They also encouraged the women to attend public events, such as *International Women's Day* and to join talks and debates on women's issues in the city. This attitude was clearly linked to the centre's focus on IPV as a collective and political issue which required activism, rather than a private, personal issue, which requires introspection.

Meanwhile, Project Rahab meetings were conducted inside a large room in the imposing Solomon Temple. Anyone entering the Temple had to leave bags and mobile phones in lockers, pass through metal detector doors and be shepherded towards the correct room by security guards. Because Brazil does have a high number of assaults carried out with weapons, this level of security is arguably necessary. However, this certainly adds to the level of hierarchy and control that is felt within the Temple. Only women are allowed to attend Project Rahab meetings and women were invited to sit in chairs in rows, similar to traditional-style classrooms, thereby discouraging interaction between the women in attendance. Abused women listened to the Project Rahab leaders and those who 'testified' to the improvements in their lives through conversion. They were encouraged to pray, individually and in unison, and opportunities to connect with other women in the group were few. After the meeting, the women were encouraged to join the service in the main room of the Temple, a space large enough to seat 10,000 worshippers. In this way, hierarchy and control was maintained, and personal problems remained an individual, rather than collective issue.

8.3 Constructions of Modern Subjectivity

8.3.1 Technologies of the Self

Foucault links the emergence of modern forms of power to the production of the modern subject (2002, [1994, 2000, 2001]). Foucault argues that power relations are integral to the modern social productive apparatus, which in turn are linked to active programs which help fabricate the collective substance of society itself (ibid). Subjectivity is constituted through power relations, which are not merely repressive, but are linked to the intention to teach,

mould, conduct and instil forms of self-awareness and identities in individuals, who are subject to constant and pervasive supervision (ibid).

Merry (2001) highlights the importance of Foucauldian ideas of disciplinary technologies within centres aimed at dealing with VAW, and points out their relevance in the modern formation of the subject. In Chapter 2 I discussed the importance Merry's (2001) work, and her analysis in her study of three organisations dealing with domestic violence in Hawaii. Merry compared an approach using a feminist analysis of patriarchy, another on prayer and the elimination of enemy forces within a framework of Pentecostal Christianity, and a local Hawaiian program focused on repentance and reconciliation within a framework of family and community. Despite differences, Merry found that all three used similar technologies in the fashioning of the self. She suggested that these 'technologies of the self' taught in the centres involve understanding feelings, making choices and building self-esteem. Merry argues that as each of the three approaches are rooted in global movements, globalisation thereby allows for differences on the basis of religion and culture, while promoting similarities in techniques of fashioning the self, "thus promoting modern subjectivity in the midst of difference" (2001:39).

According to Merry, despite ideological divergences, all the approaches to dealing with violence focus on the entrepreneurial creation of the self – the shared practice of self-creation – which is a technology associated with the creation of the modern subject (Rose, 1989, 1999; Collier et al. 1995; Foucault, 1991 [1975]). Merry's analysis is therefore useful in considering the ways in which women are encouraged to deal with situations of violence through technologies that focus on the self. According to Merry, the technologies related to dealing

with violence include making personal choices by holding people accountable, understanding feelings and learning how to control them, as well as deciding how to respond to situations (2001: 42).

Technologies of the Self in the CDCMS Under Study

In Chapter 7, I described the technologies of self at *Project Rahab*. These included classes with emphasis on techniques of self-care, in particular beauty routines, e.g. using make-up, wearing feminine clothes (i.e. heels and skirts) and always having painted nails. A white, Westernised ideal of beauty was emphasised and black features such as Afro hair were discouraged. Women were taught that the domestic sphere was solely their responsibility, and were given tips and techniques on home decoration and organising. Furthermore, the technology of *Rational Love* offered women an emotionally-controlled strategy for dealing with their problems, especially in the domestic sphere. These technologies of the self are therefore similar to the technologies that Merry found in her research, which she argues include addressing emotions, learning how to make rational choices and building self-esteem.

Technologies of the self taught at the *Women's Collective* included encouraging women to discuss problems with husbands in moments of quiet, without raising voices or resorting to arguments. In addition, they included encouraging women to transgress Christian and cultural norms which restricted the body by not allowing dancing or listening to music that does not praise God. Women were encouraged to question this control and reconnect with their bodies and their selves through dance and exercise classes (see Chapter 5).

In addition, as part of their strategy to raise attention to forms of abuse occurring inside the home, and the focus on domestic violence as a collective and political issue, the *Women's Collective* encouraged the women to write short stories about their lives. These were published in a book and distributed around the *Zona Leste*. The abused women also created a play about IPV and performed it in a local community centre in order to raise awareness of IPV. A local TV news station interviewed the women about the publication of the book and later a photographic exhibition was mounted, in the local area, inspired by the women's stories and artwork the women had made. These technologies of self-expression through art, and the subsequent attention they drew, increased abused women's confidence. Further, by learning about the Maria da Penha law, abused women were encouraged to see themselves as subjects with rights, especially the right not to be abused, which simultaneously served to strengthen women's subjectivity, linking into Merry's (2001) argument that women's subjectivity is strengthened through the criminalisation of male violence⁵⁷.

Some technologies of the self at the *Family Alliance* were similar to those at the *Women's Collective*, including learning to talk to partners calmly in moments of quiet, and avoiding arguments, especially if their partner had been drinking. The centre also offered women the chance to focus on their health and wellbeing, with massage and Pilates classes. However, these were conducted individually rather than in group, which once again limited women's interaction at the centre. A handicraft class where women could learn to decorate flip-flops and sell them, in order to generate income, was attended only by two women while I was there, unlike handicraft classes at the *Women's Collective* which were generally the most

⁵⁷ See Chapter 5.

popular classes, often with 15 to 20 women in attendance. Other technologies at the centre, described in Chapter 6, included focusing not just on the self, but on the wellbeing of the family as a whole, and taking part in couple mediation in order to improve family relations.

Technologies of the self at all three centres were therefore both individualised and individualising, based on the centre's views of what consisted of 'good womanhood' (and hence female subjectivity). At the *Family Alliance*, these technologies of the self and womanhood were linked into the centre's understanding of violence as a private matter between couples. At Project Rahab, the 'modern subjectivity' promoted through technologies of the self was that of the ideal, modern-day, Pentecostal woman-subject. Finally, at the *Women's Collective*, good womanhood and modern, female subjectivity meant bringing the discourse of 'domestic' violence into the public sphere while transforming women into feminist activists against patriarchy and gender inequality.

Modern Subjectivity and Disciplinary Programs

Merry (2001) also argues that people who end up in self-management programs have somehow "failed to constitute themselves according to the demands of modernity" (2001:44) and are "in some ways living outside the disciplinary confines of modern society" (ibid). This idea is linked to Nicolas Rose's (1989, 1999) work on the formation of the soul in modern society. Rose argues that the post-war period (i.e. 1950s onwards) allowed for new systems of government to emerge which sought to control individual behaviour through governance of the soul. Individuals learned to see themselves as choice-making consumers, and they defined themselves through the way they acquired commodities and chose spouses, as well as children and work (Rose & Miller, 1992). These processes of choice and self-definition

create social order, and those who fall outside of the bounds of appropriate behaviour usually find themselves in a program or institution which teaches them how to manage themselves and their feelings (Rose, 1989, 1999). In liberal democracies of the post-war period, rather than objects of domination, citizens must learn to regulate themselves as active participants in an alliance between personal objectives and institutional goals, which creates a form of government at a distance. Rose sees a major expansion of the formation of this self-managing system of governance under neo-liberalism and the critique of the Welfare State (Rose, 1989: 226-227).

Merry (2001) then argues that while self-management programs and the technologies they teach are ostensibly aimed at protecting women from male violence, their ultimate aim is to produce better workers and citizens. This is an echo of Foucault's argument that the tacit goal of disciplinary institutions is the production of homogeneous, docile, and efficiently deployed bodies (Foucault, 1991 [1975]). The *Women's Collective*, the *Family Alliance* and UCKG's *Project Rahab*, located primarily in low-income neighbourhoods and frequented almost exclusively by poor women have a clear, target audience in people who have not been able to constitute themselves according to the demands of modern society. The majority of women who attend these centres live on the edges of modern society: often in semi-legal *favela* settlements, with low levels of schooling, sometimes out of work for many years, with links to crime, as well as facing structural and hierarchical exclusion linked to race, class and gender⁵⁸. We can therefore consider institutions which address VAW as modern, disciplinary institutions, whose aim is to reinsert abused women back into society as homogenous, docile

⁵⁸ In Chapter 4, professionals at the *Women's Collective* estimated that at least 60 per cent of women had partners who were involved in crime, see Chapter 2.

and efficiently deployed bodies. The method of reinserting the women back into society is by disciplining the women into the modern forms of female subjectivity that this particular centre deems correct. This means, either focusing on the wellbeing of the family and on women's roles as wives and mothers (Family Alliance), becoming a feminist activist (Women's Collective), or becoming the ideal, Pentecostal woman, including the 'whitening' of unruly blackness (Project Rahab).

Turning now to the importance these centres place on addressing violence, I argue that Brazil's high levels of interpersonal violence occurring in private *and* public spaces allows us to see quite clearly how secular, Catholic and Pentecostal organisations interpret differently the root causes of violence and its impacts, which in turn affect societal understandings of both 'urban' and 'domestic' violence. Addressing VAW allows these organisations to lay blame for violence on some members of society while excusing others and becomes a way of either politicizing or de-politicizing violence. This means that centres addressing VAW aim to control women and influence women's rights through the provision of social services. I give examples to support this theory in the next section.

8.4 The Politics of 'Private' and 'Public' Violence and the links to Female Subjectivity in Domestic Violence Centres

The Brazilian example demonstrates that there are several organisations – including State, NGO/social movements and religious organisations, involved in constructing notions of subjectivity and offering multiple versions of it. In the case of centres addressing VAW, I argue that as neither violence nor gender are understood uniformly, the construction of subjectivity

in these centres is affected not only by contested gender relations (Hoffman, 2004), but also by contested understandings of violence and importantly: *who* is to blame for violence.

8.4.1 UCKG and Links Between Public and Private Violence

Chapter 2 identified the extremely high levels of violence in Brazil. The violence includes theft, mugging, burglary, crimes associated with alcohol and drug misuse, gang violence and prostitution, as well as intra-family abuse, and violent forms of policing in low-income, peripheral areas and *favelas* (Moser & McIlwaine, 2006). The levels of inter-personal violence mean that fear and insecurity have become ‘everyday’ (Scheper-Hughes, 1993) and ‘routinised’ and ‘normalised’ into the realities of everyday life (Pecault, 1999; Moser & McIlwaine, 2006).

The leader of UCKG, Edir Macedo, is a media mogul, who owns Brazil’s well-known *Record* channel as well as several other television channels. UCKG runs internet websites, a weekly newspaper ‘*Folha Universal*’ and several magazines, as well as its own music label and its own publishing company⁵⁹. In a study of the media produced by UCKG, Oosterbaan (2005) argues that the Church uses representations of urban violence in order to create a Pentecostal imagination of the spiritual battle between God and the Devil. The levels and spectacular images of violence in circulation allow the Church to put forward a compelling Pentecostal interpretation of society: the moral discourse of good and bad in mainstream news sources thus becomes the work of “God” and “the Devil” in Pentecostal ideology⁶⁰. Oosterbaan argues

⁵⁹ See Chapter 3.

⁶⁰ See the definition of UCKG Pentecostal theology in Chapter 3.

that UCKG therefore posits its pastors as powerful mediators who can save the nation from violence. Oosterbaan uses his argument about the media, violence and UCKG pastors to argue that the political success that arises from such representations means that we need to rethink the relation between religion and mass media in contemporary democracies characterized by high social inequality (2005: 359). However, for the purposes of this thesis, Oosterbaan's study of the way in which UCKG interprets violence allows me to consider a different aspect of religion and Church media: what are the gendered implications of UCKG's interpretation of violence, especially in relation to women?

In one of the weekly *Women's Moment* meetings I attended at the Solomon Temple, Edir Macedo himself came to talk us, and he took up the theme of urban violence:

You see all the chaos and violence out there? That's women's fault. Women have the gift of raising children; men don't have this gift. But these days, women are running around having sex with whomever they want, making babies and then not bothering to raise the children properly, so the mess we are in is due to women. There are so many stupid women in the world, there are stupid men too, but there are more stupid women and that's worse, because women are the ones who raise children (Edir Macedo, *Women's Moment Meeting*, 13th May, 2015).

All around me, hundreds of women nodded in agreement. As I described in Chapter 7, *Women's Moment* meetings are a time when women are taught by Bishops' wives about their normative, gendered roles as women. This included technologies of the self, such as how women should manage their time, how to make their home attractive, how to manage household finances, how to dress modestly and fashionably, how to maintain standards of

(white, Westernised) beauty etc. Women were schooled in the 'natural' and 'biological' differences between men and women, with the main focus being that the domestic sphere and raising the family is women's responsibility linked to their sex. This belief is echoed in Macedo's words: "Women have the gift of raising children; men don't have this gift."

We all knew that by "chaos and violence", Macedo was referring to the high levels of crime and urban violence that Brazil experiences, and which is mainly perpetrated by men. As described above, talk of this violence is reinforced daily through the media, on TV, radio, social media and in newspapers, as well as repeated in conversations between friends, colleagues and acquaintances. In this quote, Macedo is clearly blaming women for social problems and urban violence ("the mess we are in is due to women"), which he connects to women's increased sexual freedom ("women are running around having sex with whomever they want"). Macedo links women's sexual freedom to pregnancy, and an apparent lack of responsibility, because he suggests that women are "not bothering to raise the children properly". The focus on women as responsible for raising children is consistent with Pentecostal theology, which places women in charge of the domestic sphere and for raising children, while men are the head of the household and in charge of providing economically for the family.

Macedo makes no comment on male violence, even though men are the main perpetrators of violence occurring both inside and outside of the home. Neither does he reference male sexual activity or men's responsibility for impregnating women. His comment that "women are running around having sex with whomever they want, making babies", suggests that it is women's fault they become pregnant, which suggests that women are solely responsible for

protecting themselves from pregnancy. In Macedo's discourse, men appear to be let off the hook, which suggests that male sexual needs are accepted as the 'norm'. However, it is female sexual activity that leads to societal breakdown, because women are then not carrying out their gender-based role and raising children properly.

Interestingly, the link between female sexuality and social breakdown is one that is often repeated during times of social change. As noted in Chapter 2, Molyneux (2000) found that the same argument was made as the country modernised in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She argued that the military's restructuring of State, society and the economy inadvertently led to the breakdown of public/private distinctions and allowed for challenges to so-called 'traditional' gender roles. Women became more visible in public as workers, they took part in demonstrations for better conditions, and there was a growth in the number of women offering commercial sex (Molyneux, 2000). These forms of 'transgressive' female behaviour violated understandings of women's proper place in society and ultimately threatened family life, considered the bedrock of the nation.

Based on the quote above, Macedo's interpretation is that the country's social problems and urban violence are linked to gender role change, especially the change in women's roles. Macedo argues that women's sexual liberation is the root cause of social chaos and urban violence ("You see all the chaos and violence out there? That's women's fault"). Therefore, not only does Macedo view newer forms of gender roles and relations (viewed mainly through the prism of female emancipation) as responsible for IPV⁶¹, but also for the country's social

⁶¹ See Chapter 7.

ills and high levels of urban (male) violence. Oosterbaan's (2005) research on UCKG's interpretation of violence in UCKG media supports this view. In a detailed examination of UCKG's newspaper, *Folha Universal*, Oosterbaan argues that UCKG continuously puts forward the demise of the patriarchal family as the central problem of individual and social problems in Brazil. Oosterbaan points out that much of the UCKG doctrine and practice is geared towards the restoration of the family, which is supported by my findings in Chapter 7. Here, I argued that Project Rahab aims to restore family relations by turning the abused woman, and by extension her family, towards Pentecostal conversion, from which point she, and the family, can be cured and saved from pain. It appears that in UCKG's eyes, controlling women – also understood as the mediator between the State and the family⁶² – thereby allows for the control of men and the family, and hence the control of society.

8.4.2 Links Between Public and Private Violence in the *Family Alliance*

The focus on saving the nuclear, patriarchal family is widespread within most forms of Christianity. Similar to the Pentecostal discourse on the perils of 'gender ideology'⁶³, Pope Francis has warned that "gender theory" is a part of a "global war" against traditional marriage and family values and warned of the "ideological colonisation" of developing countries by the West (Osbourne, 2016). The Pope has repeatedly highlighted the "wounds" caused by family breakdown in modern society, which the Catholic Church links to the number of divorced people, cohabiting couples and single mothers (Mackinnon & Vaissiere, 2014). This is also linked to the growth in legalization of same-sex marriages in various countries,

⁶² see Chapter 6.

⁶³ see Chapter 2.

including Brazil. However, more progressive than some other strongly conservative factions within the Vatican, the Pope has launched a review of Catholic teachings on the family and has suggested that the Church needs to adapt to new realities. While this is highly unlikely to mean an acceptance of same-sex marriages or change on the Catholic attitude towards contraception⁶⁴, there is a belief that some changes may be implemented, such as allowing divorcees to take communion, although the Pope faces strong opposition (ibid). Interviews I conducted with staff at the *Family Alliance* revealed a similar view linked to Christian ideals around family that urban violence was linked to the demise of the patriarchal family. As I probed discussions on potential links between IPV and urban violence, I was told:

The violence a person witnesses at home, they reproduce that violence in the street. The day-to-day stress, the economic situation... both [men and women] lose control emotionally... People don't wake up thinking "today I want to hit my wife", it's linked to economic problems getting worse... and I think that drugs and alcohol are the trigger. But it starts in the home. And it's this violence in the home which then leads to the problems of urban violence we see around us (Marina, Social Worker, *Women's Family Alliance*, 29/11/2014).

We work for the strengthening of the family, because it's the home that's violent. Violence in the home causes the violence on the street... so this means that urban violence is due to domestic violence (Monica, Psychologist, *Women's Family Alliance*, 13/4/2015).

⁶⁴ The Catholic Church is officially opposed to the use of contraception as it maintains that sex should be for procreation (Mackinnon & Vaissiere, 2014).

These quotes from the professionals at the *Family Alliance* demonstrate support for the Christo/Catholic belief that societal problems are linked to the breakdown of the so-called 'traditional' nuclear, family. Like Edir Macedo and the UCKG Church, the professionals at the centre link the root cause of urban violence and criminality to violence occurring in the home, arguing that violence is witnessed and experienced in the home and then reproduced in the street. This view of the relationship between 'domestic' and urban forms of violence helps to explain the importance the *Family Alliance* gives the restoration of family links, as described in Chapter 6. In their eyes, working to reduce intra-family violence in the home and keeping families together, ultimately helps to reduce the forms of criminality and urban violence occurring in public spaces. This explains the centre's focus on technologies such as mediation between couples, in order to improve family relations. It also explains the emphasis the centre has on the importance of the role of the mother, who is responsible for family well-being, as the mediator between the State and the family, and therefore between public and private spheres.

The *Family Alliance*, founded within the Catholic Liberationist movement, focuses on upholding human rights and helping the poor, with a Christo-cultural ethic based on the importance of women's normative, sex-based roles as wives and mothers. Technologies of the self within the centre encourage women to examine their own behaviour in relation to violence and to negotiate with their partners in order to promote the wellbeing of the family as a whole. Low-income, abused women are formed into modern subjects (and Foucault's homogeneous, docile, and efficiently deployed bodies (Foucault, 1991 [1975])), by encouraging a sense of subjectivity as wives and mothers, through their specific, God-given roles based on their sex and a focus on the family.

Therefore, the *Family Alliance* demonstrates continuity rather than change, in modern-day understandings of female subjectivity. As the centre is part of the Welfare State, this highlights the State's continued role in upholding female subjectivity based on their normative, sex-based roles and suggests that despite liberalism and democracy, Catholic-cultural views on gendered forms of subjectivity, which uphold patriarchal values, are very much present in modern day Brazil. Based on the evidence from Chapter 6, where I demonstrated a strong focus on women's role in domestic violence, as perpetrators of violence towards their husbands and children, it appears that women are blamed and held responsible for 'domestic' forms of male violence and by extension, for male violence occurring in public spaces, which contributes to the breakdown of society.

Similarly, at Project Rahab, VAW becomes a tool which legitimizes UCKG's message in the public sphere, and women are simultaneously encouraged to become modern-day, Pentecostal subjects through pastoral power and technologies of the self. Linked to the Church's project of a nation, these technologies help to construct UCKG's vision of female subjectivity heavily based on so-called 'traditional' roles for men and women, although this time as Pentecostal subjects, with racialized overtones of a 'whiter', more Westernised society (as demonstrated in Chapter 7). The control of gender roles and gender relations – in particular the control of women – is believed to help improve society's social problems, characterised here as high rates of urban crime and violence.

8.4.3 Links between Private and Public Violence in the Women's Collective

Just as at Project Rahab and the *Family Alliance*, the staff at the *Women's Collective* felt that lines blurred between domestic violence occurring in private spaces and violence in public

spaces. However, they had a different view on who is to 'blame'. Edna, the psychologist explained:

Although urban violence is classified as a different form of violence, the person who practices urban violence is also part of a domestic nucleus, in some form or other. He's someone's son, someone's husband, someone's boyfriend... so I think it's very difficult that this person who practices violence outside, doesn't practice violence in the home. And where we work, well, it's a region that is very disadvantaged, with high levels of criminality, and people are involved in trafficking, in crime, involved with crack, and these people practice forms of urban violence. Well, it's mainly these women, these men's companions, or these men's mothers, who come to the centre for help because they are experiencing domestic violence. (Edna, Psychologist, *Women's Collective*, 15/5/2015).

Staff at the *Women's Collective* viewed women as victims of male violence, both inside and outside the home, which is consistent with their view of women as historically subject to patriarchal organisations which have supported male control and domination of women, thereby allowing for high levels of violence to be perpetrated against women (see Chapter 2). Female identity and subjectivity at the centre was based on teaching women a language of rights, as well as increased participation in the public sphere, through technologies of self-development such as writing, acting and artwork, which allowed the women to take part in the smaller and larger communities around them, and learning to become activists and demand rights from the State. Subjectivity for low-income, abused women at the *Women's Collective* is based on a desire for gender equality and the challenging of patriarchal culture and values. Brazil's social problems and high levels of crime and urban violence are linked to male violence, and political, economic and social policies, rather than changing gender

relations, except in-so-far as male violence and gender relations continue to maintain women's subjugation. Edna links male violence in public, to high levels of male violence in the home. Based on my research from Chapter 5, the centre staff believe that VAW can be reduced by encouraging women to transgress societal norms, demand their rights, and become feminist activists. This is because knowledge of a rights-based discourse (linked to the Maria da Penha law) as well as support from the centre staff and raising awareness of the issue of VAW as a community problem, appeared to reduce violence in the home as men became less confident that they could get away with it.

Concluding this section, I find that the Catholic and Pentecostal perspectives in this thesis link urban violence and a perceived 'breakdown' of society to women's changing roles in society, which means that maintaining nuclear family structures, despite IPV, becomes a priority. Women's roles are considered crucial to the relationship between urban and domestic forms of violence, which means that addressing VAW is deeply political, linked to contested notions of both 'violence' and 'gender', which ultimately structure the way societies function.

While all three organisations in this study support the concept of ending VAW, they see different paths to doing so, as neither 'violence' nor 'gender' are understood uniformly across the centres. By becoming incorporated into State services, or working alongside State services, the contested messages around the nature and construction of different forms of 'violence' and 'gender' become legitimised. Contracting out the delivery of public services gives power to different organisations to deliver services in the way they see fit, even though certain technical standards are maintained. For example, both the *Women's Collective* and the *Family Alliance*, as State CDCMs, offer the same services, including psychological support,

help accessing social welfare benefits, legal advice and classes aimed at physical and emotional well-being, as well learning skills for income generation. However, this thesis highlights that the delivery of these services and the impacts they have differ according to the beliefs and attitudes of the staff – state-sponsored agents of power – which are closely linked to the ethical values and aims of the centre.

This clearly shows that the State is not one large monolithic entity, but is in fact made up of a plethora of institutions and agents, who – linked to their own beliefs and practices regarding the world around them – find different ways to address VAW. The rise of FBOs and NGOs which partner with the State (i.e. the *Family Alliance* and the *Women's Collective*) and the strength of 'Third Sector' organisations which act in alliance with the State (i.e. UCKG/Project Rahab), thereby allows for State power to be (re)-appropriated and (re)-signified with legitimised messages that serve the State's need to demonstrate its pro-activeness in regards to VAW, simultaneously allowing partner-organisations to put forward their own message on how best to deal with VAW. The study of these three centres demonstrates that a single, cohesive perspective on VAW is not being put forward, despite the existence of legal means to address VAW such as the Maria da Penha Law.

8.5 Drawing the Strands Together – Final Conclusion

8.5.1 Discipline, Subjectivity and Violence

In this section I summarise and analyse my data from this chapter and the previous chapters, underscoring my research findings and conclusions. Each of the approaches studied in this thesis are rooted in global movements which have strong socio-historical links in Brazil. The

Family Alliance represents the continued presence of Catholicism, Brazil's largest and most popular religious institution, as well as Brazil's longest-running ethical tradition, which (as described in Chapter 2), has had, and continues to have, enormous influence over gender roles and relations, as well as laws regarding women's rights⁶⁵. The centre therefore represents the Catholic Church's continued importance and presence as a religious organisation heavily involved in social work in Brazil, and by becoming part of the welfare system, the *Family Alliance* represents an example of the growth of FBOs as public service providers in Brazil.

The *Women's Collective* represents a more recent global movement, the rise of feminism, which began in earnest in Brazil in the late twentieth century as the country moved towards democracy (see Chapter 2). As international ideas about women's rights, women's status, gender equality and moves to address VAW grew on the world stage, Brazilian feminists successfully incorporated international ideas with their own, national and local experiences, helping to foment women's equal rights and status in relation to men for the first time under Brazil's new Constitution of 1988. Since then, feminist organisations have mobilised to demand what are considered to be progressive laws, such as the Maria da Penha Law in order to address domestic violence and the 'Femicide Law' in order to address the high levels of female killings across the country. The *Women's Collective* therefore represents a newer form of NGO/State cooperation and shows how feminist organisations and their messages have been able to gain greater legitimacy in the fight against VAW, by becoming branches of the Welfare State.

⁶⁵ This is due to the strength of Catholic lobbies in politics, see Chapter 2.

Finally, Project Rahab and UCKG represent another recent global movement, the growth of Evangelical Protestantism, which is considered to be one of the biggest religious transformations of the end of the 20th century (Freston, 1994). Most branches of Evangelical Protestantism (represented predominantly by Pentecostalism in Brazil), are generally considered conservative, if not even fundamentalist, due to a belief in the literal interpretation of the Bible, staunchly supporting male patriarchy, female submission to husbands and intolerance towards homosexuality. In Brazil, as in the US, Evangelical Protestants have gained positions of power within politics, which influences women's rights, especially in relation to divisive issues such as abortion, access to the morning-after pill, and even definitions of violence and femicide⁶⁶.

UCKG is heavily involved in public debates over 'gender', which, following Casanova (2009) and Aune and Nyhagen (2015) lies quite clearly at the heart of religion and politics. I argue in this thesis that the growth of Project Rahab represents a new voice addressing the issue of VAW, offering alternatives to feminist interpretations of male violence, thereby seeking greater control over women by engaging in these debates, as well as greater legitimacy for their voice in the public sphere. Addressing VAW gives UCKG socio-cultural legitimacy, while simultaneously reinforcing the institution's political legitimacy. In fact, for all the programs under study in this thesis, the focus on women's rights and VAW legitimises their roles as actors in the political sphere. Each centre is part of different historical and cultural movements which focus on addressing poverty, social inequality and exclusion, and the issue

⁶⁶ See the footnote in the introduction, where I described the changing situation regarding women's rights in the US since Trump assumed the Presidency in 2016. See also Chapter 2 for more details on women's rights and the influence of Catholic and Pentecostal lobbies in government.

of VAW becomes the tool through which to mediate their particular vision of women's subjectivity.

Discipline/Power

By considering centres which address IPV as disciplinary institutions, I have been able to examine the identities and modern forms of subjectivity into which poor, battered women from low-income areas are drawn. Foucault's concept of pastoral power, with its clear link to the Welfare State, proves itself a useful tool in evaluating the ways in which the women at the centres experience a soft but pervasive form of disciplinary power. Through Foucault's concept of pastoral power within Welfare State institutions (the *Women's Collective* and the *Women's Family Alliance*), and within UCKG's Project Rahab, I have been able to demonstrate how power is exercised by agents of the Welfare State and Project Rahab mentors, within private, religious and State institutions, and how low-income, abused women are drawn into different forms of modern subjectivity. This occurred in the centres by teaching women 'correct' ways of behaving (e.g. only speaking when it was their turn to speak and not interrupting other women). In addition, I pointed out that the spatial organisation of the centres influenced either:

- A) the more hierarchical workings of the centre: e.g. at the *Women's Family Alliance* the professionals remained separated from the service users in their offices and only spoke to the women at certain times. Or,
- B) the spatial layout (i.e. the lack of space) encouraged the collective attitude of conversation and a sense of community.

In this way, I demonstrated that forms of pastoral power were at work even through space, as well as through both conversation and silence.

Women's Identity and subjectivity linked to Violence

Chapter 5 demonstrated that the *Women's Collective* uses a feminist focus on rights to advocate an egalitarian gender order, by raising awareness of women's subjugation linked to social and institutional patriarchy. At the centre, the construction of abused women's subjectivity is about accessing resources, learning to demand and exercise rights, activism and social mobilisation. In Chapters 6 and 7, for abused women attending the *Women's Family Alliance* and *Project Rahab*, I demonstrated that their sense of identity and subjectivity is mediated through their normatively gender-based roles as wives and mothers.

The fundamental difference between the secular centre and the religiously-founded centres, lies in *who* is to blame for male violence. The faith-based centres appear to blame changing gender relations, female emancipation and women's behaviour at home as the trigger for male 'domestic' violence, which in turn exacerbates male violence perpetrated outside of the home. Therefore, controlling the way women understand their roles in society, allows faith-based organisations to control gendered social relations, which they believe will reduce 'social problems' linked to male violence. However, making violence a purely personal issue in which individuals are to blame, means that male violence becomes privatised and depoliticised and the State is no longer held accountable for economic and social policies which might aggravate interpersonal violence.

By providing a gendered analysis of the *Women's Family Alliance* (Chapter 6) and *Project Rahab* (Chapter 7), I have demonstrated that VAW at both centres was viewed as personal and not a collective or political issue. I contend that regardless of whether the aim is to depoliticise or politicise violence, addressing VAW *is* political, because it is linked to the control of women, and their way of understanding and interacting with the world, which is heavily gendered. However, for these faith-based organisations, making VAW a personal issue discourages collective strategic female action, and emphasises solutions based on women adjusting their behaviour in relationships, as well as maintaining and even promoting male authority. Centres addressing VAW in Brazil are therefore sites for the fundamental secular-religious controversy over gender, which is linked to different ways of understanding how the family and civil society interact. Gender and violence are both constitutive of social relations and in Brazil, addressing VAW becomes a way of controlling female subjectivity. As no research appears to have yet examined religious discourse in relation to links between urban and domestic violence, this study provides a new angle of study to the intricacies of gendered violence research.

8.5.2 Implications for FBO research: The Complexities of Public Service Delivery by NGOs/FBOs/Third Sector Organisations and Welfare Services

In this thesis, I have sought to address criticisms by e.g. Jones and Petersen (2011), who argue that very little research has analysed the different ways in which faith or religion is signified and practised in FBOs, and who find that there is little reflection on the role of religion in ostensibly non-religious organisations. This thesis has taken some steps to fill such a gap by interviewing both professionals and service users about their religious and gendered beliefs

within both FBOs and ostensibly 'secular' NGOs, and attempting to discern how the mix of institutional ethos and personal beliefs affect the provision of services to abused women.

For example, Chapter 5 examined the role of religion in an ostensibly non-religious organisation, highlighting the way 'secular' professionals and service users 'of faith' negotiate Christian religious discourse in relation to gender and violence. I found that when well-versed enough in the service-users' faith (in this case Catholicism and Pentecostalism), secular professionals who were spiritual but did not have a particular religious faith were still able to interact with abused women through discursive techniques. Through these techniques, women of faith examined the violence they experienced within a religious framework which allowed them to make positive changes to improve the violence in their lives without feeling as though they were turning away from God or their religion. This represents an important finding within FBO research, as it demonstrates that secular organisations should not discount the importance of faith for abused women, but that neither should secular organisations be afraid to address the issue of faith, especially as it relates to gender. Several of the women at the *Women's Collective* clearly felt empowered by feminist readings of masculinist interpretations of text. At the same time, an important finding from my research was that feminist, 'secular' professionals who viewed religion as a problem which exacerbated VAW and impeded women from improving the situation of violence they experienced, learned that it was not faith/religion *per se* that was the problem, but rather the masculinist way in which Biblical teachings have been used to control women.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Beckford (2011), points out that discussions of religious organisations as social welfare providers underscore the way in which 'faith' has become a

political resource and how governments have come to see “religion as expedient” (59). In this thesis, I have demonstrated that faith has long been used as a resource to address social problems in Brazil and that successive governments have relied heavily on FBOs for the delivery of health and social services (e.g. see Mourier, 2013 and Chapters 1, 2). This also means that governments have to contend with large Catholic and Evangelical lobbies, who have considerable influence over public policy and law-making (Vital and Lopes, 2013).

In this study, I asked how NGOs and FBOs incorporated into State services influenced social welfare provision in terms of women’s rights. I have pointed out on several occasions throughout the thesis that there is controversy over FBOs as providers of social services, especially with regards to issues of gender and the provision of services to women (see Hjelm, 2015; Jeffreys, 2011; Østebø, Haukanes & Blystad, 2013). Chapters 6 and 7 provided interesting dynamics on the study of FBOs, highlighting the use of theology in both centres to address abused women of faith’s needs. Moreover, the example of Brazil highlights certain ‘grey’ areas of cooperation between religious organisations (e.g. Project Rahab) as FBOs which have either become incorporated into the welfare state or interact with state services overwhelmed or absent in certain cities or neighbourhoods.

The *Family Alliance* (chapter 6) was more deeply imbedded within State services as a welfare provider and I demonstrated way in which changes in Catholic theology (from Liberation Theology to the Catholic Charismatic Renovation) had affected the lives of those working in an FBO and the ways these theological changes had impacted the lives of abused women. The centre workers came from a predominantly Catholic Liberationist perspective, consistent with ethos of the centre, created during the peak of Catholic Liberation Theology in Brazil.

Nowadays, the centre workers therefore have to contend with growing numbers of Pentecostal women, and address the issues of both violence and faith, which were clearly intertwined around issues of gender and the roles of women. In this case, I demonstrated that the staff used theology in the cases of battered Pentecostal women, by teaching their (liberationist) beliefs around God and Jesus. However, further research would be required to examine the effects of these theological discussions.

In Chapter 6 I found that the centre maintained Catholic values, which impacted their view of women's roles as wives and mothers. This was consistent with the centre's Catholic ethos and the State focus of prioritising the role of the mother and meant that abused women were encouraged to renegotiate their relationship with their abuser, through mediation and/or by addressing the woman's own behaviour in the relationship. At the *Family Alliance*, despite some small improvements, women such as Sandra did not appear to feel empowered and experienced little transformation in the situation of violence and gender inequality they experienced in their lives.

Therefore, I do find that the growth of FBOs as providers of welfare is a concern in relation to women's rights, gender and race relations. On the other hand, my finding that it is the masculinist way that religion is interpreted, rather than religion per se, which impacts women's rights, also means that caution must be taken when using a blanket assumption that religion is bad for women. For example, Sheila Jeffrey's (2011) assertion that religious organisations should not be included in government consultations or given contracts for the delivery of public services because "religions are usually discriminatory with respect to gender and equality" (364). Supporting criticism of this view by Aune and Nyhagen (2015), I do believe

that a universal rejection of religion generalises all religions and does not take into account historical, political and socio-economic contexts. Theological perspectives must be taken on board, as the differences between the forms of Catholicism and Pentecostalism in this study demonstrate. Furthermore, both the faith-based centres were the only places also addressing men, while the feminist and secular centre only focused on women. At the Family Alliance, a male group had been created where men were invited to come and discuss problems around violence. At UCKG, programs were geared towards either men or women although I was unable to conduct research into the male programs, which would certainly have highlighted gendered aspects of the technologies of the self being taught to men.

Furthermore, religion is clearly of importance to many people using welfare services, therefore I believe that far more attention should be paid to how religious organisations can be incorporated productively, without impinging on any citizens' rights. Furthermore, my research has demonstrated that so-called 'secular' centres are having to address faith/religion whether they want to or not, because it is often so intricately linked to their service users' belief systems. Religion appears to be something that needs to be talked about, rather than brushed under the carpet and considered 'private', particularly in the case of GBV.

8.5.3 Directions for Future Research

By demonstrating the hierarchical, class, race, and gender-based inequalities in Brazil, I have been able to highlight the ways low-income, predominantly mixed-race women who live in violent neighbourhoods with high levels of crime, are able to negotiate violence in their lives. I have demonstrated that their ability to negotiate violence is based on the centres which address VAW, and the strategies and discourses offered to the women, allowing them to

identify and develop certain subject positions. With this methodology and research design, I have been able to demonstrate that there are generally few options available to poor women, and that the services on offer could be of either religious or secular and/or feminist tendencies, linked to the arbitrariness of the development of NGO/State partnerships in the area. Naturally, more time in the field would have revealed more data for analysis. Moreover, through my research I discovered that women with financial means rarely came to State-funded centres, preferring to visit psychologists in private clinics. This highlights the modest extent to which VAW is addressed from a gender perspective in Brazil, as it is only in some CDCMs that psychologists and social workers tend to specialise in 'gender' perspectives. Therefore, a longer and more detailed examination of domestic violence centres could reveal locations in which a greater class comparison is possible, and this would likely also link into racialized differences.

In addition, I justified my choice of São Paulo as the research location in Chapter 3, but Brazil is a very diverse country and levels of VAW were demonstrated to be even higher in the North and Northeast of the country. Analysis of VAW and feminism in these areas would reveal a greater breadth of understanding of the ways in which violence affects women's lives in different areas of Brazil, as well as the spread and development of feminism in poor, often more 'forgotten' areas. In addition, with a strong history of Afro-Spiritism in this part of the country, research on centres dealing with IPV from a *Candomblé/Umbanda* perspective could reveal fascinating differences on the influence of other religious organisations in constructions of gender and violence.

The locations of the centres meant I had to travel long distances commuting across São Paulo, where I discovered the difficulties many women face on their journeys to and from work. As a lone female researcher, I was forced to negotiate gendered expectations of behaviour and 'submit' to spatial expressions of patriarchy (Valentine, 1989) on overcrowded trains, tubes and buses. Daily travel between the walled spaces of the rich and the poor meant crossing boundaries, real and imagined, along gendered, racial and socio-economic lines. I therefore argued in Chapter 3 that the gendered implications of *fear* of crime and violence acted as the major constraints on my spatial behaviour and methodological choices during my fieldwork. On the other hand, the gendered aspects of circulating in a city with high levels of crime and fear of violence, as well as the real and ideological segregation of private and public space, allowed me to gain a better understanding of my interviewees and 'local' women's socialization into fear and submission. Such personal experiences can therefore deepen the understanding researchers gain of their subjects' lives. As little research has addressed the gendered experiences of male and female researchers in high crime areas⁶⁷, this is another avenue for potential exploration and future research.

Finally, as I also explained in Chapter 3, I did not have the opportunity to interview men, as the CDCM centres and Project Rahab were run by women and for women. In addition, both religious and feminist mobilisations were heavily female dominated. While the interviewing of men was not necessary for the project at hand, further research into the perspectives and experiences of men is very necessary and would reveal fascinating insights. This could include

⁶⁷ For an exception, see Nordstrom and Robben, 1996.

interviewing men whose female partners attend CDCMs and/or Project Rahab, in order to note the changes in their lives from men's perspectives. On a broader level, studying projects for men, aimed at reducing forms of domestic violence, has only been little conducted so far in Brazil and could reveal greater understandings on the male perspectives of gender construction, which could also be examined from a religious perspective as this thesis has done. I hope that the questions and indications of gaps in the literature presented here will stimulate debate and foster other rigorous inquiries that can contribute to aspects of the inter-relationship between violence, gender and religion raised in this thesis.

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Letter of Introduction and Explanation of Research Project (English Version)

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

REC Reference Number: SSHL/13/14-47



YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Negotiating Patriarchy: an Investigation into the Tensions over Women's Rights, Gender Equality and Conservative Religious Gender Ideology in Brazil

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of my PhD research. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The research and possible benefits

The research is looking into how women understand the tensions between women's rights, gender equality and more conservative religious gender ideology in Brazil. It also seeks to analyse how women negotiate patriarchal and religious organisations when dealing with violence.

The aim of the research is to give voice to women whose thoughts, beliefs and understandings over their own conditions and situations in a rapidly 'developing' society are often unheard. The objective is to allow us to develop greater understanding into how the issue of violence against women and policies intended to improve it are sometimes unwittingly undermined by different actors and organisations, including state institutions, the church and feminist organisations. This will involve an interview that will be more like a conversation with you.

Why have I been invited to take part?

The research is partly being carried out through interviews with a variety of participants who work for or have accessed organisations relating to women's rights. Participants can be anyone over the age of 16 living in São Paulo, although certain individuals have been selected to try and give a good balance of the different people living in the area and accessing these services.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part. You should read this information sheet and if you have any questions you should ask me. You should not agree to take part in this research until you have had all your questions answered satisfactorily.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. At a time convenient for you, I will then call you to discuss the interview procedure with you. On request you will be given the interview topic guide. With your consent, I will arrange to interview you in a private area (for confidentiality reasons) on voluntary organisation premises where you work (or at a suitable venue in a local public site if you prefer).

The interviews are expected to last between 1 and 2 hours and be based on the interview topic guide, but it is designed to be flexible so as to meet your needs. The questions will cover topics such as family, work, women's roles, gender equality, religion and the services accessed. It will be more like a conversation than an interview, and you can say as much or as little as you like. This is intended as an opportunity for you to express your views on these issues. Interviews may be recorded, subject to your permission. Recordings of interviews will be deleted after they have been transcribed. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason. You may also withdraw any data or information you have already provided, verbally or over email, up until it is transcribed for use in the final report on 30th September 2015.

Incentives

There is no financial incentive to participate in this research; however, any reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed. I will hold an event [date] which all participants will be invited to attend to discuss the initial findings of my research. If you would like a copy of the final report I can send one to you once the project is completed.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. The main disadvantage to taking part in the study is that you will be donating around an hour of your time to take part. It is possible that you may find answering some of the questions challenging. This is unlikely but if it were to occur the interview could be terminated at any time.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

What is said in the interview is regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind, you are free to stop your participation and to have your data withdrawn without giving any reason up to the point of publication in September 2015. All data for analysis will be anonymised. In reporting the research findings, I will not reveal the names of any participants or the organisation where you work. At all times there will be no possibility of you as individuals being linked with the data.

The UK Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to all information gathered within the interviews and held on password-locked computer files and locked cabinets. No data will be accessed by anyone other than me; and anonymity of the material will be protected by using false names. No data will be able to be linked back to any individual taking part in the interview.

You may withdraw your data from the project anytime up to the point of publication in September 2015. All recordings of data on audio-equipment will be deleted after transcription. If you ask me to withdraw your data at any time before September 2015 I will remove all traces of it from the records.

How is the project being funded?

The research is being organised by Kim Teresa Beecheno, PhD researcher of King's College London. The study is being funded by King's College London.

What will happen to the results of the study?

I will produce a final report hope to publish the research in academic journals and disseminate the findings in conferences and online forums. In all of these, all confidential and identifiable information will be anonymised.

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Kim Teresa Beecheno

Email: kim.beecheno@kcl.ac.uk
King's Brazil Institute
King's College London
Room 2.22, Norfolk Building
Strand Campus
London, WC2R 2LS
United Kingdom

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Dr. Jeffrey Garmany

Email: jeffrey.garmany@kcl.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)20 7848 2751
King's Brazil Institute
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United Kingdom

Dr. Jelke Boesten

Email: jelke.boesten@kcl.ac.uk
Tel.: +44 (0)20 7848 7574
King's International Development Institute
King's College London
Chesham Building
Strand Campus
London, WC2R 2LS
United Kingdom

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

10.2 Consent form for Participants in Research Study

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



Title of Study: Negotiating Patriarchy: an Investigation into the Tensions over Women's Rights, Gender Equality and Conservative Religious Gender Ideology in Brazil King's College

Research Ethics Committee Ref: _____

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes mean that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

Please tick or initial

☐

Please tick or initial

1. ***I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [INSERT DATE AND VERSION NUMBER] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions which have been answered satisfactorily.**
2. ***I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 30th September 2015.**
3. ***I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.**
4. ***I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the College for monitoring and audit purposes.**

☐☐☐☐☐

5. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications

6. I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it.

☐

7. I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded.

☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Participant's Statement (TO BE READ OUT TO PARTICIPANT TO GAIN THEIR VERBAL CONSENT):

I _____

Agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed

Date

Investigator's Statement:

I Kim Teresa Beecheno

Confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the participant.

Signed

Date